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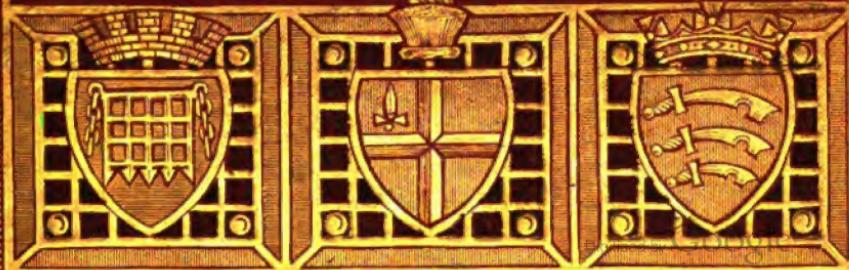
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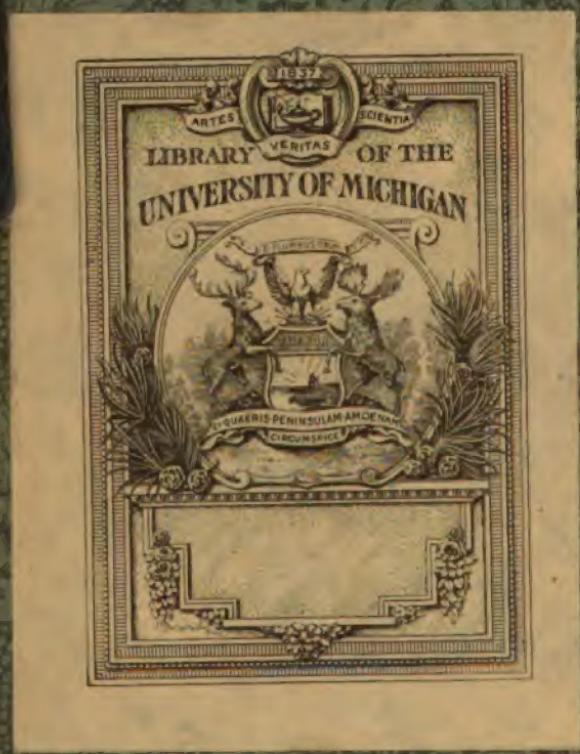
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'The two were sliding into talk'



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BELGRAVIA

AN

Illustrated London Magazine

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B E L G R A V I A.

JULY 1881.

Joseph's Coat.

BY DAVID CHRISTIE MURRAY.

CHAPTER XIX.

WRETHEDALE on a Sunday, under the summer sunshine.

I have been reading Monsieur Taine this cold March morning, and his descriptions of the English climate have set me out of sorts. I long for a day of sunshine, and I am sick for the time being of my benevolent rogue and my rascally convert. Come with me into the country, to the little western town, whose very walls you will find Arcadian after London. Let us go into sunshine and honest company.

In the church of St. Stephen the Martyr the windows were all open ; so that, whilst the sleepy curate bleated in the pulpit, you heard the sheep answer him from the meadows ; and the wind, warm and scented, brought with it the rustle of the waving sunlit shady trees outside. The day was broiling hot, the church was cool and had a pleasant earthy odour. Flecks of sunshine fell past the blinds and travelled slowly along the walls, watched by half-slumberous worshippers sweetly unheedful of the curate's voice and oblivious of the meaning or no-meaning of his drowsy periods.

A hot day, a cool shady church, a bleating voice that soothed and faltered not, a lullaby—lulla, lulla, lullaby—peace, peace, and deep tranquillity of soul.

Not asleep, nor yet awake, and only alive enough to be placid and at rest, sate old Daniel with his plump hands caressing his round waistcoat, and his spindle shanks supported by a hassock. Dinah by his side, with a sore heart soothed, not by the thrice-three-thousand-times-winnowed chaff of the bleating curate's discourse

(an excellent young man the curate, a capital bat, but no orator), but tranquillised by the holy quiet of the place and time. For a little while, a heart at rest.

Not far away from the pew in which Daniel and Dinah sat, was young lawyer Keen, with his long hair in picturesque disorder and his grey eyes looking afar off through the curate's Geneva gown and the curate's body. When the curate's bleating murmur was cut short all on a sudden, John awoke with a start from his reverie, and the organ's voice was the voice of love to him. The hymn being sung and the benediction given, away scurried John to shake hands with old Daniel. Daniel would not attempt to go home-wards without Dinah. Dinah would not attempt to go without Ethel, and the young man was wonderfully fond of the old one. Not that he was a hypocrite, more than ever so little; he really liked old Daniel, found him interesting and odd, as he had always found him,—but perhaps he was a greater chum of Daniel's than he would have been if the old boy had been more separable from his daughter, and his daughter had been more separable from Miss Donne. For this young man was in love full fathom five, and, though he professed to know his passion hopeless, he fed it as often as he could. Whilst he shook hands with Dinah and her father in the porch, he had a lover's ears for the voluntary Ethel played inside. He would fain have stayed within to listen to it peacefully, but was beset with fears lest for once Daniel should have persuaded Dinah to start without the organist.

'Good morning, Miss Banks,' said John, with the old air of guilt upon him.

'Good morning, Mr. Keen,' said Dinah, holding out her hand.

'How bin you, sir?' asked Daniel.

'How are you?' asked John in return.

Then the conversation languished, and lawyer Keen felt desperately guilty, under Dinah's gentle gaze.

'Lovely weather!' he said at last.

'Yes,' said Daniel. 'It's fine likely weather for the time o' year. It strikes a bit code to the bones, like, when you'm i' church, though.'

'It does,' said John, catching at this conversational ark of safety. Aboard the theme he found footing until the organ ceased to sound, when he became silent again, and his guilty look returned. By-and-by Ethel emerged from the church—to John's fancy an angelic presence. Nor yet so far away from an angelic presence in my own. Her eyes were like dove's eyes, as the old Hebrew lover said of his love's; her face as good and gentle as it well might be, a little pallid—the lover's heart was piteous about the

cause of the pallor at all times, when he saw her—she came through a band of sunlight which lay across the porch, and the light glorified her beautiful hair and the creamy laces at her throat. John began to blush and tremble in the presence of this beautiful divinity of his.

‘Good morning, dear,’ said Ethel to Dinah.

‘Good mornin’, my darlin’,’ said motherly Dinah, with warm solicitous affection.

‘Good morning, Miss Donne,’ said the tremulous young lawyer, hat in hand. ‘Good morning, Miss Banks; good morning, Mr. Banks.’ And away he went, routed for the twentieth time, in spite of his resolve. That right to raise his hat and say ‘Good morning’ was all poor John got out of his lingering at the porch on Sundays. ‘I haven’t got the pluck of a mouse,’ he said to himself reproachfully. ‘Why can’t I face her? Why can’t I speak to her? Why do I look like a fool whenever she looks at me? Ah, poor thing!’ pursued the unvaliant John, ‘she’s had such trouble, it would be a shame in me to trouble her further. And of course for years and years to come, whenever any fellow looks at her as if he cared for her, she’ll think of that scoundrel of a Banks. Of course she will! And I shouldn’t care for her if I thought she wouldn’t. But I’m not going to be beaten. If any other fellow comes in, in the course of a year or two, any decent fellow that she can like and be happy with,—why —’ John found that prospect unpleasant. A lover’s thoughts are likely to be contradictory. The peculiarity about him is that, until he comes to look back at his own raptures and despondings, he regards them as filling up the most miserable time of his life. It is only when the time is over that he discovers how happy it was. My friend Mr. Francillon has put much philosophy into a nut-shell on this theme:

We doubted, quarrelled, tore ourselves asunder;
 Faith mimicked falsehood, hope was like despair;
*We doubt not, strive not; calmly now we wonder
 Why we were happy, yet we know we were.*
 Then dawned no day but brought twelve hours of sadness;
 Then fell no night but knew twelve hours of pain;
 Now night brings rest, and day brings hope and gladness;
 Yet—could we only love and weep again!

John went to church with great regularity; and, if he wrote satiric verses on the bleating curate, forbore to give them publication. The people of Wrethedale found no fault in him. He was as well-conducted a young man as any in the town, and walked with so much circumspection that even Ethel could see nothing in him to blame. And I may say here, that good and charming as

she was, she regarded poor John with a very unreasoning dislike and distrust; and had momentary twinges of hatred over him, concerning which she rebuked and humbled herself continually. She had naturally a tender conscience and a vivacious temperament. Tenderness of conscience grew morbid under the hands of Thomas à Kempis, and her youth and trouble were sure guarantees for an occasional touch of anger in a woman of her complexion. You must understand that these contentions were inward, and that she rarely by any chance spoke an ill-natured word; but she used to feel mightily indignant at thousands of things which a year before would have passed her unnoticed, and having felt indignant invariably felt sinful afterwards, and read her dear à Kempis with passionate desire to equal or come near his spirit. A good girl with lofty spiritual longings and a heart that ached.

'Dinah,' she said with some severity, as John walked away into the sunlight of the street, 'I wish that young man would not speak to us.'

'Do you, dear?' said Dinah meekly. 'He was an old friend of—ours.'

Oh the wound, the wound towards which every chance arrow struck anew in both of them! Ethel took Dinah's arm, and without a word or a glance, apology and pity flashed from each to each, for the two had learned to love and understand each other rarely.

'I likin' young Keen,' said Daniel; who, apart from the difference of sex and age, was of a coarser fibre. 'I wish my lad had took example by him. Eh, dear me!'

'Father!' said Dinah, warningly and beseechingly.

'Eh dear me!' Daniel said again. It was little, but it was enough, and the two women's eyes brimmed over behind their veils.

Ethel, by special invitation, dined with Daniel and Dinah that day; and it need hardly be said that, after this reminder of their trouble, the table was quiet and the meal a sad one. It was easy to recover composure, but anything like vivacity would have seemed a crime and most unnatural, and not one of the three had the heart to be commonplace. So they ate in sadness and without appetite; and in a little while Daniel went upstairs for his nap.

'Sing me something, dear,' said Dinah; and Ethel sat down at the piano and sang hymns, until the elder woman put her arm about the singer's neck, and sliding suddenly down, knelt at her feet, and dropped her head into Ethel's lap.

'Hush, hush!' said Ethel, taking Dinah's head in both hands. 'What is it, dear? what is it?'

'Oh,' cried Dinah, 'I've been a wicked woman all my life: a wicked, false, deceiving woman!'

'Nonsense, dear!' said Ethel decisively. Then more gently, 'You mustn't talk so.' Then more gently still, 'What is it?'

'How can I tell you?' wept Dinah. 'Oh my dear, it was all my wicked, wicked fault as he went wrong—as he was tempted.'

'Why, how could that be?' asked Ethel, with soothing incredulity.

'Oh! If I'd ha' told the truth from the beginning, if I'd had the courage to face the neighbours an' take my shame, he'd ha' had his rights—he'd ha' had his rights—I know he would!'

Ethel recalled the words which had fallen upon her fainting ears on the day of George's committal. 'The child I bore!' Had she not dreamed or misheard them, after all? Was this thing true of Dinah?—of Dinah, amongst all women in the world!

'Dinah!' she said, forcing the other's face upwards, and looking at her with an almost fierce anxiety; 'tell me what you mean, this minute.'

'He was my child!' said Dinah. 'My mother passed him off as hers, but he was mine. An' I've gone through life with a lie i' my hand, an' now it's found me out—it's found me out.'

Ethel sat sternly amazed, and had nothing to say for a while. Dinah, thinking herself scorned, and wholly feeling that she deserved it, shrank slowly away and wept anew, holding her face in both hands.

And this was Dinah? thought Ethel; this was the woman she had so loved and pitied. For a second or two the thought was very nearly as terrible as anything she had yet endured. But as Dinah shrank away from her, the younger woman, with a sudden passionate impulse, cast herself upon her knees and snatched the sinner to her breast, and their tears mingled as they clung together, and Ethel rocked her to and fro as if Dinah had been a child.

'I don't care!' her heart cried out, 'I *will* love her. Whatever she has done, I will love her and hold to her.' The girl's heart ached anew with sudden pity.

Then, as they knelt there, Dinah told her story; and it came out that the sinner was no sinner, after all. But when the tale was told, Ethel asked in amazement,

'But why, dear—*why* shouldn't the neighbours have known?'

'I'd lost my lines, darlin',' said poor innocent Dinah.

'You silly woman!' cried Ethel; 'what difference could that make?'

'You don't understand,' persisted Dinah. 'My weddin' lines.'

'Yes, yes,' said Ethel with tender impatience. 'What difference could it make? You could have got another copy from the

church where you were married. The copy would be quite as good. You could get one now. You are a lawfully married woman, and you need never, never be ashamed.'

'I could get my lines now?' asked Dinah, with a face of wonder and dismay.

'Of course you could,' cried the other.

'At Waston Church?'

'Of course you could.'

'Oh my dear, if I'd only ha' knowned it!' And Dinah wept afresh. 'If he'd had his rights, he'd never ha' been tempted. Oh what a wicked, wicked foolish woman I have been! Ethel, my dear, forgive me for talkin' about him, because I know it hurts your heart as bad as it does mine. But, darlin', when his time's up, what is he to do? Oh dear, oh dear! He is my child, for all he's been so wicked. I bore him, an' I nursed him, an' I used to suckle him on the sly at first, as long as ever I dared. What will he do when he comes out? What can he do? Can I get his rights for him? Could I get enough to keep him and send him away out o' the country an' let him have a chance to be a good man again? Oh, could I, could I, darlin'?'

In the passion of this entreaty she fawned on Ethel and caressed her with imploring hands.

'Yes,' said Ethel boldly; 'I am sure you could. Whatever would have come to your husband is lawfully yours.'

'An' nobody 'd think,'^{*} asked Dinah brokenly, 'I wasn't an honest woman?'

'Nobody!' Ethel answered again boldly. She scorned and hated young George now as well as ever she had loved him, for she had large capacities in that direction, and the one villain she had known had brought them into play. But though she believed that she would not have lifted a finger in his behalf, she could understand his mother's fears and longings, and her heart went with them. He was a scoundrel, but justice was justice; and even if he shared in the advantages of it, Dinah ought to have her right. 'And did Mr. Bushell know this before the trial?' she asked after a time spent in soothing Dinah.

'Yes. I went to him an' told him, but he pretended to misbelieve me. I went to the court o' purpose to tell the magistrate, an' I should ha' done it if George hadn't—'

There she stopped, and Ethel kissed her with chilly lips.

'I'm sure he didn't really misbelieve me,' said Dinah. 'I could see he didn't. But he's a hard man, my dear, and he was afraid of losin' his money.' She paused again, and hung her head when she continued. 'He miscalled me very bad, my dear.

He said he wouldn't believe a word o' my tale, and he told me'—her voice faltered lower as she repeated old George's words of righteous anger—'that I ought to ha' had my legs in the stocks for bringin' such a story to him.'

'He dared to say that!' cried Ethel indignantly. 'Get your certificate at once, and take every penny of your husband's money from him.'

'If I could only get enough!' returned Dinah dejectedly. 'You know, it's his rights, after all, and what belongs to him belongs to him whether he's been good or bad.' Ethel made no answer. Young George was a terrible theme for either of the women, but in Dinah's case conscience was at work. It is worth notice that what are called the torments of conscience assail the best and leave the worst untouched.

Dinah found herself so pressed that she determined upon duty at any hazard. It was hard, after hiding so long, to make the revelation she was bound to make. But she had sacrificed herself all along, and she was bound to go on sacrificing herself to the end.

'Will you come with me to-morrow,' she whispered to Ethel, 'if I go to look for it?'

'Yes,' said Ethel, with an air of resolution.

So next day the two women practised a deceit on Daniel and Mrs. Donne, and under wicked cover of a pretended visit to the market town they took train towards their old home, and, reaching Waston Church after a four hours' journey, sought the vicar and made application for a copy of the certificate. The vicar despatched a messenger for the sexton, and that humble official conducted them to the church. His department appeared to be looking up, and he scented perpetual heir-money in this new craze for certificate-hunting. The sexton was one of those people with whom single instances make habits. Two swallows furnished ample evidence of summer.

The dusty old register was brought out again, and the entries for Whit-Sunday in the year eighteen hundred and fifty revealed the fact that thirty or forty couples had been united in Waston Church on that day, but the names of Joseph Bushell and Dinah Banks were not amongst them. Dinah and Ethel looked at each other in blank dismay.

'Is this the only register you keep?' asked Dinah, beginning to think that Ethel had been almost as ignorant as herself.

'Yes, ma'am,' said the sexton. 'That's the only one as is kep' here.'

Ethel, with a certain feeling of dizzy discomfiture, was turning over the half-dozen entries, rather to hide her own looks of dismay

and to get time to think than with a hope of finding anything. Suddenly she gave a sharp little cry.

‘Dinah! Look here!’

Dinah came and saw nothing, but Ethel strained the pages open, and there, between the third and the fourth entries for that Whit-Sunday, lay the root of the missing leaf. The eyes of the two searchers met with instantaneous recognition of the truth.

Ethel turned lawyer in a second.

‘I suppose,’ she said to the sexton, ‘that very few people come to ask enquiries of this kind?’

‘Not many, ma’am,’ returned the sexton, with a tinge of sorrow. He suspected nothing, supposing the cry ‘Look here!’ meant no more than the discovery of what his visitors required.

‘How many do you get in a year, now?’ she asked.

‘Well, ma’am,’ returned the sexton, ‘I’ve been here seven years, an’ you an’ this lady is the second parties as has been here.’

‘Oh, indeed!’ said she. ‘Has nobody been here since Mr. Bushell came?’

‘I don’t know the party, ma’am,’ returned the sexton, ‘not by name.’

‘He would be here, I fancy, about six months ago,’ said Ethel. Dinah was looking on at this with a scared face, but Ethel was smiling and gracious, and the sexton thought her quite a nice young lady. Her manner was one of sweetened commonplace, and the man did not dream that she cared a copper to find out anything.

‘Oh no, ma’am,’ said the sexton, ‘not near as long as that. Only a few weeks back, ma’am.’

‘And he didn’t give you his name?’

‘No, ma’am.’

‘It was sure to be Mr. Bushell, darling,’ with a warning pinch, Dinah still looking scared. ‘Wasn’t it?’

‘It must have been,’ said Dinah in a frightened voice.

‘What was the gentleman like?’ asked Ethel, in a casual way.

‘Why, he was a stoutish elderly party, ma’am,’ returned the sexton; ‘pretty tall an’ stout, with grey whiskers; dressed in black clothes, ma’am.’

‘Yes,’ said Ethel graciously. ‘Thank you.’ The sexton touched his forelock again and again at her gratuity and her smile. ‘Good-day,’ she said sweetly.

‘Good-day, ma’am,’ said the sexton. ‘Good-day, my lady;’ and away they went to the sunny road, leaving the sexton to lock up the despoiled register and close the church.

'My dear,' said Dinah, clinging to Ethel's arm, and speaking half hysterically, 'he's stole it to rob him of his rights.'

'To rob you,' returned Ethel quietly. 'Let us go back and think over what is to be done.' Then decisively, 'We must see a lawyer.'

If young George had only played his cards in his defence with an indiscretion less pronounced, and had never made that unfortunate deposit of the stolen notes, Ethel would have believed in him all through. It was only the memory of these things which prevented the revival of faith ; and even as matters stood, she began to believe in an indefinite way that the younger scoundrel had been trapped into being wicked by the elder. To hate sin and love the sinner is a Christian maxim, but Ethel coupled a detestation of the sinner with her loathing of the sin even while she confessed to herself that the mother's right must be respected. And the mother's right was clearly the right to care for her child to the end, and to do what she could to fence him round from harm and to shield him from temptation. And Ethel could bear less to think of him as sunk into hopeless degradation and compelled to crime, than to think of him as being undeservedly prosperous, and perhaps softened in that way to repentance. Her feelings and her conscience therefore went one way. 'Do good to them that despitefully use you' was a text which gave warranty enough for conscience, and her heart was wholly with Dinah, the full sadness of whose history she had so lately begun to comprehend.

The two conspiratresses salved their consciences that day by a brief halt at the market town, during which they made reckless purchases to account for their lengthened absence. They reached home dog-tired, Dinah quite broken by this latest difficulty, and Ethel roused to an almost heroic resolution. It is perhaps needful to explain, if only for the sake of a hasty reader who will not imagine more than he can help, how it came about that Dinah had at last confessed her secret. Whilst her mother lived there had been somebody to share it with, and the burden was divided. From that time until her introduction to Ethel, Dinah had had but the merest casual everyday acquaintances ; and if George had prospered, she would have been content to carry her secret to the end. But when the young fellow went so completely to the bad, and when the mother began to reflect upon his future, the weight became too dreadful, and a part of it must at any risk be thrown away. And apart from that, Dinah was desperate and at bay, facing circumstance with a tragic and heart-broken heroism of which only women are capable. The psychology of the case is simple. Her own sin of secrecy in respect to the marriage had

resulted in her child's sin of dishonesty. You and I would not put it so, but it was inevitable that Dinah should fasten the two things together in that way. Her sin had led to sin, and she must make atonement. So the poor thing confessed, as the first step, to one she loved, and whom she had helped to injure. What Ethel could not achieve she did. She hated the sin, but she loved the sinner still. He had gone in her arms as a baby, she had kissed the rosy dimpled feet now so pierced with the thorns of evil ways. He was her child, after all, though he were a thousand times wicked ; and even now she would have borne his punishment for him, and have rejoiced to do it. Foolish, but like a mother, and perhaps not altogether to be condemned or lightly spoken of.

CHAPTER XX.

'DINAH,' said Ethel next morning, 'did you ever ask Mr. Keen to tea ?'

'No,' said Dinah listlessly.

'Will you write and ask him ?'

'Why, dear ?'

'I want to meet him.'

'Why, it was only o' Sunday last,' said Dinah, 'you wished he wouldn't speak to us.'

'Did I ?' asked Miss Donne disingenuously. 'Well, I want particularly to see him now, dear. Will you ask me to tea to-morrow and ask him to come also. Ask two or three of the people whom you know from the church, and have a little party.'

'Ethel !' said Dinah, reproachfully.

'My darling,' returned Ethel with an air of determination, 'we cannot stay at the point we have reached. We must go on. That wicked man must be punished for stealing the certificate, and you must have what belongs to you. Until we know what to do, we can do nothing.'

'But how will givin' a party help us to find out *what* to do ?' asked Dinah.

'I will put a supposititious case to Mr. Keen,' said Ethel, losing a little of her colour as she spoke,—'you find things like it in novels, dear,—and he will never for a moment guess that I am offering him a real case. You don't want your secret to be made the common talk of the country, and we must manage it by ourselves. If we consulted a lawyer, you would have to tell him everything, and that would be terrible. You know what those stupid men do. They get things into newspapers and make

everybody talk about them. Now, when we know what is the right course to take, we can do whatever must be done quite quietly.'

'But if you punish Mr. Bushell, people will have to know,' objected Dinah.

'Not if you only punish him by frightening him and taking your money from him. I believe they hang people for stealing from a church register. I am sure I have read that somewhere. And you don't want to do that.'

'Not for everythin' in the world,' cried Dinah.

'If you go to a lawyer,' said Ethel, confident in her superior knowledge, 'I am afraid they would hang him if they found him guilty. Of course he knows that, and when we know what to do we can frighten him, and make him give up everything he has of yours. It is right that you should have it. Let me write the notes of invitation. Shall we ask Miss Wade? "Miss Banks presents her compliments to Miss Wade, and will be pleased to see her at tea to-morrow (Wednesday) afternoon at five o'clock." Shall we ask Mr. Gimble, the organist at Shareham? "Miss Banks presents, &c." Now to Mr. Keen.'

Dinah acquiesced in this programme with fear and trembling. Three young ladies and three young gentlemen were invited. Ethel promised to bring her mother, and the purchases from the market town were investigated. Most of them appeared to have been made with a view to this stroke of policy, now that the policy was revealed, and Dinah meekly and timidly submitted to Miss Donne's overwhelming generalship. On the morrow, with fluttering hearts, the conspiratresses met again, and shortly afterwards the guests began to arrive. The Reverend Walter Boyper, curate at St. Stephen the Martyr's; Miss Boyper, sister of the foregoing; Mr. Gimble, the 'arrant duffer' who before Miss Donne's time had played the organ at the Martyr's; Miss Wade, an elderly young lady of some private means, known to be a devout attendant at the services of the Martyr, and suspected of setting her cap at the bleating curate. All these came, but no John Keen. Mr. Keen was waited for and came not. Tea was served and finished and taken away. The curate sang—

What the bee is to the floweret
When he seeks for honey dew,
What the bird is to the boweret,
That, my love, I'd be to you.

Miss Wade was understood to accept this as a delicate attention. Mr. Gimble, who was popularly accused of a hopeless passion for Miss Boyper, sang 'The Heart Bowed Down.' Miss Boyper in musical response declared that she would marry her own

lad, her own lad, her own lad ; that she would marry her own lad, for true of heart was she. Ethel sang two or three ballads, and Mrs. Donne with stiff country dignity sat with her hands crossed and her toes together, and was deliberately uncomfortable. No John Keen, and no word from him. Daniel, who was getting more frail every day, went to bed early ; and the guests, taking this as a signal, began to leave. The summer dusk had settled into summer night, and Ethel had but lingered for a word or two of hope and encouragement to Dinah, when a rapid step came along the otherwise silent street, and paused before the door. Then the bell rang, and Dinah went herself to answer it.

‘ Is Miss Banks within ? ’

John Keen at last.

‘ Come in, Mr. Keen,’ said Dinah tremulously ; and John entered fluent in apology.

‘ I have been away to Borton, Miss Banks,’ said John, ‘ to a two-days’ cricket-match, and only found your note on my return ten minutes since. I ran up to say how very sorry I was to lose the opportunity your kind invitation gave me. I hope you have had a pleasant evening.’

‘ Quite a nice evening, thank you,’ said Dinah, leading the way to the parlour. John with repeated excuses followed, and became on a sudden dumb at the sight of Miss Donne. That deceptive young woman arose with a smile, and shook hands with him. This was delicious, but so embarrassing, all things considered, as to be scarcely bearable. He half recovered his voice in a while and murmured, ‘ Came to apologise and explain ; sorry to miss the pleasure ; trust to have another opportunity ; ’ and then, being again routed, said ‘ Good-night,’ and turned to fly.

Ethel cast an appealing glance at Dinah.

‘ Pray don’t think of goin’ yet, Mr. Keen.’ And she took his hat away and handed him a chair. John sat down in a miserable elysium, and Ethel began to talk to him. Mrs. Donne had some time since put a shawl over her head and walked into her own house next door, through the wicket gate which connected the two back gardens ; and the guests having departed, John and Ethel and Dinah were alone. Dinah took no share in the conversation, but sat and listened with mingled expectation and fear.

‘ By the way, Mr. Keen,’ said Ethel rather abruptly, ‘ I want to make an appeal to your legal knowledge.’

‘ Yes,’ said John.

‘ You read quite unbelievable things in books sometimes—in novels, you know—and the critics often laugh at books for the false ideas the writers have about law. Now, I want to know what

would really be the punishment for stealing a certificate of marriage from a church register.'

'Well,' said John, 'I dare say a judge would make it depend very much upon the issues involved. I should fancy the punishment wouldn't in any case go under a couple of years, and it might under aggravated circumstances run up to twelve, fifteen, twenty.'

'So much?' asked Ethel with outward innocence. 'They wouldn't hang him?'

'Oh dear, no,' returned John.

The two women felt horribly guilty, and one looked it. Ethel carried on her scheme with an excellence of mendacity for which nobody would have given her credit.

'And now, how would anybody really go about, in real life, to find a certificate that had been stolen?'

John was delighted to be questioned upon a topic of this sort.

'That depends,' he answered, 'on the date of the marriage. Nowadays, a man would be simply an ass for his trouble if he stole a church certificate of marriage.'

'Why?' asked Ethel almost too eagerly.

'Because,' said John, 'all the registrars' records are preserved at Somerset House. Suppose, now, that I wanted to prove a marriage, and some clumsy swindler stole the church certificate, all I should have to do would be to go up to London, to Somerset House, and pay for a certificated copy of the register there kept.'

'That depends, you say, on the date of the marriage?' asked Ethel, as calmly as she could—calmly enough for John to see nothing, since he looked for nothing, but with enough disturbance to be seen by Dinah, who watched for it. Dinah's heart was well-nigh failing her.

'Well,' said John reflectively, 'any such crime would be quite futile if it attempted to hide a marriage which had taken place within the last thirty years. I'm not certain that even earlier than that it might not be trouble wasted, but of the thirty years at least I am quite sure.'

Ethel looked across at Dinah, and that glance completed what the journey and the discovery of Monday, the suspense of Tuesday, and the disappointment of Wednesday had begun and carried on. Dinah broke out crying. Ethel was by her side in an instant with consoling arms about her. John looked on helpless and astonished.

'Don't, dear, don't! Hush! hush! hush!'

'Oh my dear,' wept Dinah, 'no blessing'll ever rest on anythin' got at i' that way. Oh my dear, it isn't right. I don't blame

you, my dear, because I led you into it. You, as never spoke a word as wasn't true till now, an' me to lead you into such wicked make-believin'!'

'Hush ! hush !' implored the exposed conspiratress.

John was more helpless and more astonished than before.

'What good,' sobbed Dinah, 'has ever come of my wicked hidin' of the truth ? What good has ever come of it ?'

'Control yourself,' whispered Ethel.

'My dear,' said Dinah, struggling to speak calmly, with indifferent success, 'it's been growin' on my mind for years an' years. It was wicked to hide it from Joe's father an' mother, an' it was wicked to hide it from mine. It's been a sin all along, an' now it's found me out. But I'll own the truth now, an' bear the blame, an' everybody shall know what a wicked woman I've been.'

John was more and more wonder-stricken.

'*You a wicked woman, you suffering angel!*' cried Ethel, folding Dinah's head to her bosom, and swaying it to and fro.

'I have been a wicked woman all along,' protested Dinah. 'But I'll lead nobody else into wickedness again. I'll tell the truth and bear the blame. Mr. Keen,' she said, lifting her tear-stained face from Ethel's bosom, 'I'll tell you everything, an' then you shall advise me for the best.'

'Not now,' said John, recovering himself a little. 'Whatever you may have to tell me, Miss Banks, tell me at some future time, when you are less agitated, and more mistress of yourself. I would very much rather'—he went on, in answer to the expression of her face—"I would very much rather not hear it now, whatever it may be. I should feel that your confidence had been surprised. Let me go away now, and if you see fit, send for me in the morning. If not,' he added rather vaguely, 'let us forget all about it.'

Dinah would have laid hands upon him, and have told her story there and then, but Ethel held her firmly.

'Mr. Keen is quite right,' said Ethel ; and John, with those approving words in his ears, made off. He was naturally much bewildered, although he, quite as strongly as Ethel, repudiated Dinah's self-accusations ; and he slept none the more soundly for the curious scene he had witnessed.

Dinah after his departure exhibited an altogether new phase of character. She turned sullen, and declined to listen to reason.

'I'll do what's right,' she said. 'Nothin' shall change me.'

'But, dear,' urged Ethel, 'we can get a copy of your marriage lines from Somerset House, now that we know they are there ; and

we can write to Mr. Bushell, or go to see him, and tell him what we know, and frighten him into doing justice.'

'I'll do what's right,' Dinah sullenly declared. 'Nothin' shall change me.'

'By all means do what your conscience tells you,' said Ethel. 'But it is surely not a matter of conscience with you to tell your private affairs to Mr. Keen.'

'I'll do what's right,' repeated Dinah. 'Nothin' shall change me.'

After this third declaration Ethel forbore to press her. Dinah, after all these years of self-repression, was in a mood to cry her secret from the house-tops, and she lay awake all night determining more and more to visit lawyer Keen in the morning and tell him everything. Whatever was done now should be done openly—so she resolved. Merely to shield herself, she had let her child go without the knowledge of a mother's love; and she thought now, with what unavailing longing only a mother may rightly tell, how differently all might have gone had she been brave enough to own him as her own. She could see now that almost anybody could have enlightened her ignorance about her marriage lines; and if she could but have used a mother's love and authority with the lad, she felt sure that he would have grown up to be a different creature. And since secrecy and deceit had brought things to their present evil pass, she would have no more of them. Let everything henceforth be open and above-board. Much as she felt herself shrink from public notice, she would rather that the whole world knew her story and talked about her than have another secret to weigh her down, or endure the weight of the old one any longer.

Before Dinah could start with any hope of finding John Keen awake, Ethel came in again, and found the resolve of last night as strong as ever. All attempts to dissuade her were trouble thrown away, and in due time Dinah put on her things and went out, leaving Ethel behind dissatisfied. Perhaps the dissatisfaction found root partly in the fact that John Keen was to be the recipient of Dinah's long-cherished secret, and that Ethel's own deceitful manœuvre was to be exposed to him. She did not care greatly for Mr. Keen's opinion, but she did not wish anybody to know that she could have found it in her nature to finesse and make pretences *in that treacherous way*. What would Mr. Keen think of her? How could he fail to see her as she was?—a sly and cat-like creature who had every right to be ashamed of herself. Oh, how she had deceived him—pretending that she had merely taken a case from a novel, while she questioned him with an air of indifference on an affair of such moment. And suppose—lawyers took fees for advise-

ing people—suppose he should fancy that she had attempted to defraud him of his fee!

When John came to hear the story, he was naturally a good deal astonished; but though he was a young man, he was accustomed to curious stories in the exercise of his profession, and he accepted this one with little sign of amazement. Dinah laid the case before him with trembling, and expected to be rebuked for all her wickedness; but the young lawyer faced it with a business air, and seemed to have no great belief in her surprising wickedness. He made notes clear and succinct in form, and bowed his visitor away with a manner somewhat pre-occupied.

'I will let you know something about the matter in a day or two,' said John. 'It is not at all a complex case to deal with.'

Dinah felt as if she had been speaking to a statue, he took everything in so cool a way; but when she had gone, the lawyer threw his professional bearing aside, and travelled up and down his room, pausing every now and then with some exclamation of astonishment. He could afford to be astonished now that his new client was not looking at him; but he would not waste time about it.

'I shall have lots of time to wonder,' he said, 'as I go up to town.' With that reflection he began to pack; and on consulting a time-table, found himself in easy time for the London train. The railway-station being at no great distance from his house, he himself carried his small portmanteau thither, and was whirled away to London; arriving in time to drive straight to Somerset House, and secure a copy of the certificate of Dinah's marriage. With this document in his possession he drove to Euston, booked for Birmingham, and before nightfall was settled in the smoky midland capital. Thence he wrote to Dinah informing her of his first success, and in the morning he made for the country church in which the marriage had been solemnised. The sexton by this time was accustomed to the request John had to proffer. It was getting to be quite a usual and ordinary thing for strangers to turn up and pay him for a sight of the parish register. He received his new visitor, therefore, with calm satisfaction, and ushered him into the little vestry with the air of a man who is about his common business. John, with the certificated copy before him, turned to the missing page, and found there the root of the stolen leaf.

'Who cut out this page?' he asked quietly but suddenly, and fixed a penetrating eye upon the sexton.

'Eh?' said that small official. If he were guilty of any share in the matter, he was a cool hand indeed.

'A page has been stolen from this register,' said John, tapping at the book. 'It has been stolen within the last six or seven months.' It was easy to guess that. Whilst the marriage remained a secret, nobody was likely to steal the entry. 'Who has had access to this book since then?'

'Who's seen the book, d'ye mean?' asked the sexton. 'Why, two ladies as was here t'other day, and a gentleman as was here some weeks back.'

'Should you know the gentleman again?'

'Surely I should!' the man answered.

'Are you busy? Can you come with me—if I pay you for your trouble—for an hour or two?' John demanded.

'I ain't particular busy,' said the sexton. 'But what might you want me to do?'

'Wait a moment. Now try to remember very clearly. Did you leave that gentleman alone at all?'

'No, I didn't,' said the sexton stoutly. He saw a chance of being got into trouble, and he made his denial with considerable emphasis. To John Keen's perception he rather overdid it.

'What, not to get a glass of beer?' asked John, at a venture. He put that query to the sexton with a look so knowing that the poor man quailed, and capitulated surlily.

'Well, there ain't no harm in that, as far as I know.'

'We shall know more about that by-and-by,' said John. 'Don't try to deceive me any more.' Beneath the legal glance the sexton cowered. 'How long did you leave him alone with this register?'

'Why, not above a matter o' five minutes.'

'You left a stranger alone with a church register for five minutes, did you?' asked John severely. 'Now, I am a lawyer, and unless you behave yourself to my satisfaction you may get into trouble. Are you busy to-day?'

'No, sir; not particular.'

'Then, lock these things up and come with me.'

The man obeyed, but paused at the church porch to ask—

'What might you want me to do, sir?'

'I want to see if you can recognise the man whom you left alone with the register.'

'I should know him among ten thousand,' said the sexton.

'I suppose,' said John, 'you know how to hold your tongue when it is to your own interest?' The sexton nodded gloomily. 'Then, until I authorise you to speak, be quiet, will you?' The man nodded gloomily again, and it was clear that he was perturbed.

'I shall pay you for your time and trouble,' said John, relenting a little. 'And now come along!'

And John set out with the sexton beside him in pursuit of old George Bushell.

CHAPTER XXI.

WHEN dawn began to broaden through the blinds of the double-bedded room, old George, looking woefully worn and lined, sat up on his elbow and looked across at his *protégé*, who slumbered peacefully with his mouth open and his eyelids and nose still a little inflamed by the heat and salt of tears. Christian forgiveness and benevolence never wore a guise in which they looked less like themselves than they did in old George's case that morning. With his fluffy grey hair tumbled loose about his head, his eyes shrunken small, his wooden features puckered into corners and sharp edges, and his flannel night-gown opened at his throat, he sat and surveyed the object of his charity and shook his fist at him. The young man being evidently very sound asleep, the elder arose and began to dress with great quiet, having it in his mind to avoid a renewal of the terror of last night. He dared not go upon his knees again—just yet. In a month or two, perhaps, when his wickedness was less fresh upon him, he might try to pray, and might fairly expect to be excused, but not then. So he prowled about like an ugly and dishevelled ghost on tiptoe, and having washed and dressed with extreme quiet, he put on his hat, unlocked the bedroom door, and went out silently. Then, having closed the door behind him, he began to knock at it loudly with his knuckles, and hearing a sleepy 'Who's there?' he entered again.

'Good morning, sir,' said the other criminal shamefacedly.

'Good mornin', Mr. Banks,' answered the old man. 'It's time you was stirrin', ain't it?'

The youngster obediently got out of bed and dressed, fumbling unwontedly with his garments, and confused by the wooden watchfulness of his companion. When, in accordance with his own resolves and his promise to the chaplain, he knelt by his bedside, his thoughts were so full of a comfortless appreciation of the fact that Mr. Bushell was staring hard at the back of his head, that he did not even cast about for a form of words, but, having knelt for a decent space, arose and completed his toilet.

It was yet barely five o'clock, and there was nobody but themselves stirring in the hotel. Mr. Bushell finding time as heavy on his hands now as when he had lain tossing and tumbling in bed,

naturally began to think the late estate better than the present, and regretted that he had awakened his charge so soon. He sat down by the window and pretended to read at a big hotel Bible which he took from the top of the chest of drawers, casting furtive glances at young George now and again. The released one sat constrainedly doing nothing, and wishing himself with all his soul at sea, and safely out of his benefactor's society. He had had no idea that Mr. Bushell was a man of such rigid religious practice as he seemed to be, but his beliefs in that gentleman were undergoing, or had indeed undergone, a remarkable change. Furtively he looked across at him and wondered. Where was there in his face a sign of that amazing tenderness he had shown? There was no such sign visible to the furtive watcher's eyes. If there had been in young George's mind the faintest ground for any suspicion of an interested motive, he would have leapt to that standing-place at once, and have refused to take any other, however plausible it might appear. But there was nothing of the kind, and he was lost in amazement and gratitude, though, in the midst of all his thankfulness, he was growing more and more resolved about the Melbourne question. He pretended to himself to hold that question open, but he knew that he was quite decided, and that the expectant Nally and Tulson would look for him in vain. Yet he was full of good resolves, and was profoundly convinced of the necessity which lay upon him to be honest in the future. He was going to be more than honest—he was going to be devout, but this one crooked step was necessary to enable him to enter upon the straight path. Then, being once within it, he would never, never, never deviate any more.

Thus benefactor and *protégé* sat together, each busily engaged in the hoodwinking of his own soul, until the sound of footsteps in the corridors, the calling of voices and clapping of doors, bespoke the house alive again, and they adjourned to their private sitting-room together. There the old man ordered breakfast, and, by way of maintaining his character, murmured a clumsy grace above it, which sounded, even in the repentant gaol-bird's ears, as though it were unhabitual. Breakfast, for which neither of the two had any great appetite, being finished, Mr. Bushell called for his bill and paid it, saw young George into a four-wheeler, and his luggage placed on top, and himself entering, was driven to the docks. On the way thither he drew out a fattish pocket-book, which young George had twice or thrice seen before, and producing from it a bundle of bank-notes, he began to thumb them carefully over, whilst the watcher's heart beat with a fluttering expectancy.

'Count them,' said the Christian benefactor, handing the bundle across.

Young George with nervous fingers told them off. Twenty ten-pound Bank of England notes. It was an amazing relief to have them in his hands, though, curious as it may seem, it was only then that the fear occurred to him that his benevolent rescuer might have remitted the money to Messrs. Nally and Tulson of Melbourne.

'What do you make 'em?' asked Mr. Bushell.

'Two hundred pounds, sir,' said the other tremblingly.

'Now don't let's have no moor snivellin'' said old George, rather brutally. He was afraid of being noticed, and at the bare thought of encountering anybody known to him he shivered and a premonition of that dreadful swimming in the head came back upon him. 'Put 'em in your pocket,' he continued. 'Theer's what I promised you, an' now you're provided for.'

Young George obeyed like a man in a dream. Even yet he was not used to it.

'Now, Mr. Banks,' said the old man, leaning forward and drawling loudly as the four-wheeler jolted along the cobbled pavement of the street, 'I want you to understand as that ain't the last help you'll receive from me if you deserve it. The world's afore you, an' I look to you to do well. You'll be wise to give all your past acquaintance in this country the go-by, and remind nobody of your crime. If I hear good accounts of you, I shall do my best to influence your father to overlook your offence, but you'll be wise not to attempt to write to him until I advise you. D'y'e hear?'

'I will follow your advice, sir, in all things,' said young George faintly.

'Theer's nobody,' so the old man cogitated, 'as he's likely to write to, left i' the place.' Daniel had gone, no man seemed to know whither. John Keen had faded out of sight. So had Ethel and Dinah. And young George was certainly ignorant of their whereabouts?—It might be as well to test that.

'You know as Mr. Banks has sold the Saracen, don't you?' he asked.

'I didn't know it, sir,' answered George with downcast eyes.

'Him an' your—sister'—he half boggled at the word, he had 'mother' so strongly in his mind—'an' the folks at Quarymoor, have all gone away together nobody knows wheer. But—'—remembering that this scarcely agreed with his promise—'I shall try to find your father, and persuade him to soften to you a bit, if I hear good news of you.'

The young criminal began to think. If his father cut him off, and that was likely enough, Dinah would inherit whatever there was. Dinah had always been very fond of him, and was not the sort of woman to cheat a brother of his rights. He did her so much credit, and he began to see that there was hope, after all. She would not be influenced by Mr. Bushell, and it would be easy to find her. She could not have gone away and have left no trace behind.

The released convict did not weep anymore, and his companion, though he was relieved by that fact, had upon him a contradictory feeling that the young man ought to have been moved anew by his last evidence of trust and kindness. The noise and bustle of the docks were a great trial to Mr. Bushell, for he saw in every stranger a possible acquaintance, and the danger of detection seemed imminent and terrible. He rushed young George aboard ship, therefore, and went down with him into the saloon, where he began to feel feverish with suspense and fear.

'I'll mek' efforts,' he whispered behind his hand, 'to find out wheer your folks are, an' theer's no manner of doubt I shall ha' found 'em afore you get to Melbourne.'

'It will be a long search, else,' said young George to himself drearily and with an inside reproach.

'If you want to write to them, send through me, an' I'll find means to forrad your cause.'

'Thank you,' said young George chokily. 'Good-bye, old England!' he thought. He was going away a rescued felon, disgraced and disowned, and only (of all his friends) the man he had injured clung to him.

The steward approached.

'Better get ashore, now, sir.'

'Good-bye,' said the old scoundrel, 'an' God bless you! You'll be met at Melbourne. They'll know the ship you're coming by. I shall send 'em a message by wire.'

'Good-bye, sir,' said the younger rogue.

Old George gave a limp hand to him, and hurried ashore. Dreading to be recognised, yet afraid to leave until he had seen the last of his *protégé*, lest even now some stroke of fortune should prevent him from going, he lingered on the quay. At eleven o'clock to the minute, the splendid ocean-going steamer began to move; slowly and heavily she forged ahead; and old George, seeing his young namesake now on deck, ran alongside puffing and panting until she cleared the dock-gate and steamed majestically down the river. There was a great crowd about him, and hats and handkerchiefs were waving on the steamer and on the quay, and

land and water alike sent out a cheer. Hurrah and good-bye from quay to deck and deck to quay. Hurrah! Good-bye! Hurrah! In a while all went quiet, and old George walked away a free man. The certificate destroyed, the wicked Rightful Heir forever banished, what had he to fear? He put that problem to himself a hundred times, and he always answered, 'Nothing,' though there was a dread within him which would not be appeased.

'What is theer for me to be afraid on?' he asked himself, and always answered, 'Nothing.'

But the voice inside said, 'Everything. The whole world-wide chapter of accident. Any and every little wind of chance. Me —your conscience!'

And as poor old George's evil fortune would have it, the very next Sunday morning, when he went to church, the incumbent at Trinity preached from this text:

'What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?'

So Joe Bushell's son was following—with a difference—in the steps of his father, and leaving England and hearts he had made sore behind him. He was free—free to go where he would, and carve out his fortune with the lessons of the past behind him. Whatever came to pass in the future, he would at least be honest. He went down from the saloon deck to the saloon, and asked for a small bottle of champagne, for he felt badly shaken, and needed a reviver. After that he was not going to be extravagant, but he could afford five-shillings'-worth of delight and self-gratulation after all he had endured. The wine, at his request, was poured into a big soda-water glass, and as he held it and watched the beaded bubbles winking at the brim, his heart sent up a bubble or two of joy to his eyes; and as he sipped, things looked dim and blurred to him, seen through those thin tears. He sipped his wine and thought. It was necessary to escape at Queenstown if he meant to evade Messrs. Nally and Tulson at all. Very well—but was it necessary to sacrifice his luggage? That would be a pity, and would be ungrateful into the bargain. The two portmanteaus were in his state-room, but the big chest was on deck waiting to be lowered into the hold. He finished his wine, walked out, and looked at it. So far, it bore no distinguishing mark—for in the rush and hurry of his preparations, the painting of name or initials had been forgotten. George thought that fortunate. 'George Banks' was not a good name to go through the world with, after what had happened to the holder of it; and though he was

registered under that title in the list of the ship's passengers, he decided that this was the last time he would bear it. Whilst he stood looking dreamily at the chest and cogitating, a sailor precipitated his thoughts into sudden form for action by preparing to haul away the trunk towards the open hold.

'Steady, there!' said George. 'Don't stow that away yet.'

'Ain't this for Melbourne?' asked the man.

'I am not yet certain,' young George said, rehearsing this final necessary lie of his upon the seaman before trying it elsewhere. 'I am booked for Melbourne, but until I reach Queenstown I cannot tell whether or not I shall have to forfeit my passage-money.'

'That's rather awkward, sir, ain't it?' said the man good-humouredly.

'Yes,' said George condescendingly. 'How long do we stay at Queenstown?'

'Eight hours, sir,' the man answered.

'Dear me!' said George; 'no more than that? I may have to stay in Queenstown for the next ship. You had better leave it out.'

'I'll put it in last thing, sir,' said the man, 'so that you can get at it easy. But there's no name on it.'

In a pocket of the suit of clothes he wore—the very suit in which he had been arrested—George had a card-case, and producing this, he drew forth a card and saw the man tack it on to the chest. Then he marched away to find the captain. They were in the Irish Channel by this time, and having lovely weather and smooth water. The first bustle of departure was over, and the captain was at leisure to advise a first-class passenger.

'Just before leaving my hotel to come aboard this morning,' said George, 'I received a telegram instructing me to call at Queenstown, and in a certain eventuality to remain there to await new instructions. In case I have to stay and to follow by the next vessel, will it be competent for me to recover my passage-money or any part of it?'

'The company's agent will see about that at Queenstown,' said the captain. 'But,' with suave politeness, 'I trust you won't have to leave us.'

'I trust not,' said young George. 'How long do we stay at Queenstown?'

'Eight hours, sir,' said the captain.

'That,' said George, carrying on his comedy, and doing his best to make it look lifelike, 'is a very short time.'

'We move along, nowadays,' said the captain with a cheerful laugh.

' You do indeed,' said George. ' This is a very fine boat.'

' Anything else I can tell you ?' asked the captain, finding himself summoned by his first officer.

' Nothing, thank you,' answered George, and so they parted mutually satisfied. ' A free man again ! a free man again !' the champagne sang through all his pulses. A free man again, and not a soul to suspect him here. The lie had prospered. It sounded natural enough—why should it not prosper ? Who was to guess that he broke a compact with the only friend he had in all the world, by not going on to Melbourne ? He talked to his fellow-passengers about it—what a nuisance it was, this probability of his having to stay in Queenstown—and they took an interest in the case, and had arguments about the probabilities and non-probabilities of a recovery of the passage-money, until George himself began to be interested in the matter too, and half-believed his own tale. He grew almost pathetic in his laments to a middle-aged lady with whom he fell into talk on the saloon deck.

' I had hoped,' he said, ' to pick up health a little on the voyage. I have been longing for the sea for a month past.'

That was true enough, but the middle-aged lady would have been a little astonished if she had had shown to her the where and when of the longing.

' You do not enjoy good health ?' said the lady.

' I do when I get it,' said George with chastened gaiety, and the lady was so complaisant as to smile. ' But I am only newly recovered from a fever. Had to shave my head,' said George with quite a fine-gentleman manner, ' and strap me down. Imagined all sorts of horrors, don't you know, and was really dreadfully ill.'

With suchlike scraps of imaginative autobiography did our youthful traveller beguile time and the middle-aged lady, until the call to dinner. He already felt himself again, and if his gaiety was sometimes a little tremulous, what else could be looked for in a man so pallid—a poor fellow only recently recovered from a most prostrating illness ? He declared on deck again in the evening that the sea-air was already doing him a world of good after the close confinement of his—sick room ; and probably it was. His regrets about the sacrifice of the voyage, even for a week or two, were almost affecting. He had such a longing for the sea, and had so looked forward to it, and now, poor thing, his hopes were dashed. It is certain that if he had continued the voyage as he began it, the ladies at least would have petted him prodigiously. A well-set broad-shouldered young fellow, with a handsome figure and a face by no means unhandsome, a pleasant tenor voice, a look and tone approaching to the look and tone of culture—a released

felon, yes, but once Ethel Donne's chosen husband. Quite a taking young person, and almost in hysterical spirits just then, as might have been predicted of him, considering the circumstances.

He went ashore at Queenstown, and came back with regret painted visibly upon his pale and interesting countenance. His instructions had not arrived, and he was compelled to stay behind until the despatch of the next vessel. People quite condoled with him, and said 'good-bye' in the friendliest and most regretful manner, considering the brevity of their acquaintance with him. His luggage was put ashore, and the captain gave him instructions as to the best way of going about to obtain a consideration for his lost passage-money in the next vessel of the same line, and even wrote a note introducing him to the Queenstown agent of the firm. The young gentleman tore his card from the top of his trunk and extracted the tacks. He had his portmanteaus painted with the initials 'G. C.,' and his big chest painted 'Mr. George Cheston.' He got cards engraved and printed with the name of Mr. George Cheston, and he shipped himself by the very earliest vessel to New York. And then, when he stood upon the vessel's deck and passed from Queenstown Harbour, he felt himself doubly free—free of the old crime and folly, free of the name associated with it. The past was wiped out.

Ban, ban, Caliban !
Have a new name and be a new man !

On the Atlantic voyage he made new friends under his new name—the name was the best he could think of—gentlemanly, but not too swellish, and represented, as we know, by an honourable family in his own district. His hair grew, his moustache was rapidly approaching its normal fascinating droop and curl, and his cheeks had recovered their colour, before the ship's look-out sighted Sandy Hook. And how about his spiritual condition? Well, perhaps that was not altogether satisfactory even to the young man himself. A certain number of lies were necessary, of course. Or rather, let us deal gently with him, and call them—not lies, but—visionary circumstances called into being by the exigencies of the case, and employed necessarily as a background and plot to stand on for the new figure which now filled the place of George Banks in the scheme of the world. Grant that, under the conditions in which he was placed, a strict veracity would have been quixotic, and that a little new colour was excusable. The mischief is that when a man turns artist in that direction, he loses his sense of strict necessity, and seldom pauses at its boundaries. In brief, young George's lies were more than equal to the circumstances, and, led away by his new name, he had gone so far as to

ask one or two people to give him a look-up at his brother's place in Staffordshire—Sir Sydney's place—Worley Hall. 'Dear old Syd'—so the good-natured youngster was satisfied to call him—would be delighted to see any friend who had known him in America.

This newly-discovered relationship with a wealthy English baronet made it necessary, if only for the dignity of the family, that the traveller should put up at a first-rate hotel. One or two of his travelling comrades were doing the same thing, and advised him to follow in their steps. He was knocking about for his health, and thought of taking a run across the prairies, and seeing if he couldn't get picked up in that way. And so fairly afloat on the pleasant rapids once again, he glided along quite gaily, with his laugh the briefest crackle of thorns, poor fool!

New York, like other places, is pleasant to men who have leisure and money. Our young friend engaged much in games of mingled chance and skill, and prospered so amazingly with the not very skilful but moneyed young Englishmen who had voyaged out with him, that his funds increased for the first month in spite of extravagances. But when at length they continued their travels and left him behind, he did begin to think seriously about making a living. So many people already knew him in New York, that he could not possibly descend from his social pedestal in that city, and he felt that he must go farther afield. But whilst he considered what it would be best to do, he hung on at the big hotel, where he amused himself by night at pool on an English table, and pretty generally won at it. One evening, before the usual party had assembled, a grave-looking man of middle age strolled in, and asked for a drink and a cigar. Being provided, the grave-looking man sat down and smoked peacefully, and now and then sipped at his liquor through a straw. George had seen the new-comer at *table d'hôte*, but had never exchanged a word with him. The middle-aged man sat at one end of the table, and George at the other, and until now they had never encountered.

'It's a fine evening, sir,' said George in his pleasant tenor voice, as he lounged resplendent on a settee facing the grave man's seat.

'That is so, sir,' said the grave man.

'I suppose,' said the friendly George, 'that your climate is pretty severe here in the winter time?'

'Well, yes,' returned the other. 'That is so.'

George offered one or two other remarks of the same sort, and the two were gliding into talk, when some of the habitual pool-players came in and the game began. The grave man sat awhile

and watched, until he had finished his drink and smoked out his cigar, when he arose and went away. Next afternoon George came across him again as he was leaning over the balcony with a cigar in his mouth and his hat tilted forward.

'Beautiful day,' said the young English aristocrat. The grave stranger tilted his hat back, nodded seriously at George, flicked the ash from the end of his cigar, and went on smoking. By-and-by he spoke.

'You are not long away from England, I believe, sir?'

'Not quite half a year,' said George. That day seven weeks he had said farewell to the chaplain. But there was no need to tell the stranger *that*.

'I hope,' said the other with a singular mild gravity of face and voice, 'that you won't charge me with eaves-dropping, but I heard you talking last night with those young gentlemen at the billiard-table. You mentioned a place at home that I used to know very well when I was a lad.'

'Indeed?' said young George carelessly. He fluttered a little at this, and flourished a scented handkerchief about his face to hide a momentary confusion. 'You are an Englishman?'

'Yes,' said the stranger with the same mild gravity; 'a South Stafford man.'

'Indeed?' said George again, and blew his nose with violence.

'Excuse me for asking,' said the stranger, 'but I've been away now for a quarter of a century or thereabouts, and that's a long time. Has Worley Hall changed hands?'

'Oh dear, no,' answered George.

'Excuse me for asking, again,' pursued the stranger, 'but I heard you speaking of your place, Worley Hall in Staffordshire, and I didn't catch your name. Since the old place is in the same hands, I needn't ask it. You're a Cheston, of course.' There the stranger's mild gravity gave way to a smile, and the smile was pleasant and inviting.

'My name is Cheston,' said young George, with an approach to hauteur in his voice and manner.

'So Sydney got married, did he?' said the stranger.

'Sir Sydney is my brother,' replied young George.

'Eh?' said the stranger with a new smile. 'Did the old boy marry again? I beg your pardon. But I should have thought you too old for that.'

'My father remarried comparatively late in life,' said George, feeling very ill at ease under this examination.

'Now, I should have thought,' resumed his companion, regarding him with candid friendly eyes, 'that you were six-and-twenty.'

at the least. And you can't be more than three-and-twenty, at that rate.'

'That *is* my age,' said George stiffly. Had he been the man he pretended to be, there was nothing in the stranger's manner at which he would or could have taken offence. Of course there are ways and ways of asking questions, but the grave man's way was provocative of trust, genial and frank, though always tinged, even when he smiled, with a look which no man ever wore whose life had not been crossed by some very considerable trouble.

'I dare say,' said the stranger, 'that you've heard Sir Sydney speak of me. He was the last man I shook hands with on leaving England. Allow me to offer you my card. My name's Bushell—Joseph Bushell. Your brother and I were at school together, and were great chums years ago.'

George perforce took the proffered card and produced one of his own. 'Mr. George Cheston, Worley Hall, Staffordshire.' He felt singularly ill at ease, and would rather not have met an old friend of his brother's, though of course it was difficult to say so.

'Thank you,' said the newly-made acquaintance with tranquil heartiness, 'thank you. It does a man good to meet a face that comes out of the old country. You won't mind my asking you—will you?—come and dine with me to-night, quietly. We'll go to Delmonico's and have a room to ourselves, and a good dinner and a good talk. Will you?'

'Thanks,' said the impostor. 'I am pledged for to-night.'

'Well, say to-morrow night. Come to my room now, if you've nothing else to do, and have a smoke and a talk and a glass of wine. Do!'

There was nothing else to be done, and the long-lost Joe haled off his old chum's brother to his own sitting-room, and there began to pump him. But first the impostor, desperately, feeling it needful to clear the ground a little for himself, and to carry the thing off with a good air, put one or two questions to him.

'I think,' he said, crossing his legs negligently, and speaking with a society drawl, very well managed on the whole, 'that I *have* heard Syd speak of you. You're a nephew of old George Bushell's, the great mine proprietor?'

'He wasn't a great mine proprietor in my time,' said Joe, gravely smiling again, 'but he was my uncle. He's alive?'

'Oh yes,' said George, somewhat recovering his ease. 'I know the old boy well.'

'His brother Joe, my father,' asked Joe—'is he alive?'

'No,' returned George, rather startled by this question. 'I've heard he died before I was born. You didn't know that?'

'No,' said the other gravely. 'I didn't know it.'

'You bolted?' said George, growing more and more inured to the situation.

'Yes,' said Joe Bushell. 'I ran away from home.'

'You lost a pot of money by it,' said George easily. 'I've heard Syd say that your governor left your Uncle George a quarter of a million.'

'So much as that?' said Joe quietly. 'Well, I'm glad Uncle George had it. He was a good old fellow was Uncle George.' He sighed inwardly and murmured to himself, 'Poor old dad!'

'Eh?' said George.

'Nothing. There are great changes in the place, I suppose?'

'Great changes. Town Hall and Free Library in the High Street. Two or three new banks. The place grows, sir, rapidly.'

'Ah! No doubt—no doubt. Great changes—great changes.'

His drooping head crushed his brown beard upon his breast, and his voice fell again into a murmur as he repeated, 'Great changes.'

(*To be continued.*)

The Unrepresented Majority.

THEIR EDUCATION.

It has been observed by a philosopher (though one of the paradoxical order), that it is a serious misfortune that the Criminal Classes have never been represented by any ‘organ’: that their views and opinions should be absolutely unknown to the general public, and only guessed at by the persons who are specially interested in their suppression—magistrates, policemen, and the like, whose eyes are only too likely to be blinded by prejudice or hoodwinked by hobbies of their own; and that consequently, in combating with the enemies of society, we must always be more or less striking in the dark. The philosopher goes on to say that, for all we know, thieves may be a very good sort of people in their way, with ethics and religious principles of their own—but into that maze, since for my part I have only the commonest common-sense for my guide, I decline to follow him.

What seems to me to be a much greater misfortune (since it affects a much larger class) than any ignorance of the morality of burglars, is that the views and opinions of the general public to which I belong, the people who individually are of no consequence, but who collectively are, roundly speaking, the British nation, should be practically without a spokesman. Everybody who writes about anything becomes *ipso facto* so very superior, and treats us, the mere majority of his fellow-creatures, so very much *de haut en bas*, that no attention is paid to our ideas upon any matter. There is a general notion, it is true, that in purveying for our amusements our tastes are consulted, but this I am well convinced is not the case. We are told what we ought to like, and especially what we ought not to like, but that is all. Upon our least remonstrance (which, however, very seldom gets into print) we are told we don’t know what we are talking about, or dismissed in contemptuous silence, as idiots. We suffer, but, like the dumb creatures, without a cry; like them, too, it seems we are unable to combine, or by our brute strength and overpowering numbers we might sweep our tyrants from the face of the earth, and be happy in our own way.

Perhaps it may be cynically asked, Who *are* our tyrants? In these days of the Majesty of the Press, that is a question a little dangerous to answer; but the fact is, that some of the very worst

of them are editors. It is they who write more contemptuous things than anybody about ‘multitudinous mediocrity’ and ‘the masses,’ of which I am a humble unit—a unit, but still an integer, or whole number. Personally insignificant, I am yet, as Mr. Walt Whitman would say, ‘complete in myself.’ I have tastes (such as they are), feelings, passions, opinions; and when editors (for example) call me a fool, I am quite conscious of the insult. What increases my annoyance is that this violent language is not necessary to their health; some people when thwarted are obliged to swear or they will burst, and even when things go smoothly with them are naturally given to vehemence of expression; but editors can be civil enough when it suits their purpose. Before the last general election one would have thought that if we, the commonplace thinkers and voters, really had any friends in the world among people of influence (which we have not), they were the conductors of the press. We were appealed to on both sides as ‘patriotic,’ ‘far-sighted,’ ‘noble-hearted,’ ‘judicious,’ and ‘independent.’ I used to rub my eyes as I read the papers, and had almost begun to doubt, since such charming encomiums were passed upon me, whether I really was a person of no consequence, after all; and whether the great party to which I belong were such ninnies and noodles as they were usually represented. Then, hey presto! no sooner was the election over, than not only were all these kind expressions withdrawn (as though they had been insults, and the offenders were afraid of an action for libel), but a flood of abuse was poured upon us (from the side that was beaten) such as even I, who have been a person of no consequence for half a century, had never experienced. ‘Fools,’ ‘dolts,’ ‘gulls,’ ‘the Proletariat’ (a name quite beyond me, but which, from its constant use by editors, I conclude to be an injurious term) were amongst these flowers of speech. Now, I ask, in common fairness, did we deserve this? I make no pretence myself to being a ‘horny-handed son of toil;’ it is not only ‘mechanics and others’ who are people of no consequence; indeed, many of the upper class are practically even of less consequence than the lower, since they have no votes—but though not of the lower classes, I am *with* them (being in the same condemnation), and sympathise with their recent political behaviour. If they had deserted the People’s William—the only person of importance since the Gospel times who has even in the most distant manner hinted that they are of the ‘same flesh and blood’ (I use his very words)—would they not justly have been described as the ‘fickle multitude,’ the dog that bit the hand that—well, at least had patted it on the head? Persons of position and intelligence have no idea how

gratefully people who are of no consequence welcome a little civility, if only it is unaccompanied by patronage.

Mr. Lowe that was (for he has departed into the paradise of the Upper House) was another favourite of ours. For though he hated ‘the herd’ (such was his graceful way of referring to the mass of his fellow-creatures), so far from despising us, he acknowledged that we should come to be his masters; which we *shall* be, as sure as eggs are eggs—or rather, as sure as eggs will be chickens if you give them time enough. It is pleasant to down-trodden people, let me tell you, to feel that their turn is to come round; that even dogs may have their day, or even a longer duration of supremacy. I say that Mr. Lowe was dear to us, because, though he thwacked us, he also thwacked our enemies: he knows the classics, and (Heaven bless him!) does not believe in them. An honest man, mark you, who might have been a schoolmaster, is not to be found every day.

Now, indeed—after a great interval of time, however—it seems that other persons who have distinguished themselves as scholars are beginning to see that it is not everybody who can bear all their weight of learning ‘like a flower,’ and that we poor asses have been labouring for generations under a well-nigh intolerable burden. Professor Huxley says, ‘Assiduous application of the method of concomitant variations has not, as yet, enabled me to discover any relation of cause and effect between ordinary Greek scholarship and literary culture properly so called’—and if that is a specimen of the professor’s ordinary style, he is undoubtedly right. Mr. Sidgwick of Rugby, who follows on the same side in the ‘Report of the University Syndicate on the use of Greek in the Little Go,’ but has also the gift (to *us*, of the greatest importance) of making his views intelligible, confesses that, for dull boys, Greek is not merely useless but pernicious: ‘the accident,’ he says, ‘is so much more complex than any other accident’ that ordinary boys can never master it (nor do they ever do so by any accidents). ‘They never get the ideal,’ he continues, ‘nor even the idea of doing their work perfectly, and they give up the idea of being sure of it; and nothing can be more demoralising to the intellect than this.’ I can only say, if Mr. Sidgwick is right, that the intellects of the county magistracy, for example, who have been all educated at public schools (and nine-tenths of whom belong to my party), must be in a very unfit state (if demoralisation is unfitness) for the administration of justice. Mr. Sidgwick goes on to complain that we poor average schoolboys who are condemned to the Greek galleys ‘make shots at the inflections, shots at the syntax, shots at the general sense,

and shots even at the spelling.' I should rather think we did; and there have been often moments when we should like to have made shots at the masters. But with all the sound sense our would-be liberator displays upon this subject, he expresses not one word of sympathy or compassion. Sun of heaven, what have I not endured from childhood to adolescence, shut from your glorious light and the fresh summer air—

Kept from the playground, oftentimes
Upon no ground whatever,

by that accursed Greek! If this is not the greatest of our grievances, it is at least the earliest. Even at this distance of time I remember what I have suffered from that dead language; and would that it were not only dead, but—well—cremated. Think of the tears—not 'idle tears,' though we were miscalled idle for not liking it—the oceans of briny tears which the schoolboy of no consequence, the average purblind student, the lad who will never be Fellow nor even Scholar, though he should cram his poor little brain for centuries, has shed over that hateful and preposterous compilation, the Greek grammar! Talk of wars and famines and pestilences! The miseries inflicted by them on the human race sink into utter insignificance beside the almost universal wretchedness wrought by classical education. Some honest creature recently said of Music that it was like War, which gratifies a few but makes the great majority of mankind miserable. But, thank Heaven, you needn't listen to music: if it isn't very loud, you can think your own thoughts while it is going on, or even add up accounts in the corner. But the poor little schoolboy blundering on with his *megas*, *megasa*, *megan* (which it ought to be if analogy is worth a dump), has no option; he cannot decline the task (any more than *megas*), and his sole comfort is a little beeswax and honey, which, spread on the palm of the hand, is said to mitigate in some infinitesimal degree the strokes of fate.

I protest that when I behold a small child of the male sex and the upper classes, and of the usual dead level of intelligence, my heart bleeds for him. He appears to me, when I think of the future that lies before him, as I suppose an unbaptised babe *in extremis* must appear to a tender-hearted Calvinist. Only, in my case I do not take the justice of his sentence for granted, but wonder what he has done, or what his fathers have done before him, to deserve such an untoward fate. Mrs. Barrett Browning once wrote a pitiful appeal for the poor little slaves of the factory—'The Cry of the Children'—which touched all hearts save those of the millowners. I wish I had her genius, that I could make known the sufferings of the children of another rank, but who are

in one sense even of less consequence, since, so far from *their* work putting money into their parents' pockets, it is a source of great expense. The pounds-shillings-and-pence part of the question is indeed a most important one. I once read (though of course I didn't understand it) about the 'unforeseen expenses of the Afghan war'; but what is a trifle of six millions to the millions that are wasted every year at our classical establishments in the endeavour to manufacture silk purses out of sows' ears?

Some years ago the 'Christian Community' were shocked beyond measure by a proposal of some much-too-free-thinking person to make a crucial test of the wards of an hospital, the tenants of which were in one case to be prayed over and in the other to be doctored. The best advice was to be given in each case, and the proposer of the experiment was prepared, he said, to back the doctored ward to get well first, for money. Perhaps the patients in the other ward objected to it, and at all events the plan was never carried into execution; but it suggests to me this idea, into which, however, by the nature of things, the question of comparison cannot enter. Let a dozen specimens of average humanity, but of the upper classes, be selected—an ordinary M.P., an average merchant, a commonplace engineer, a dull soldier (you may pick them out from any dinner-party); lock them up as though they were jury-men (only, not together), and make them swear upon the Evangelists to give you their honest views upon what they have gone through in their educational career, what it has cost them, and what they have got out of it. Their evidence, if published as a Blue-book, would open the eyes of the blind—unless they had a vested interest in public-school endowments.

The fact is, 'of the Glory that was Greece and the Grandeur that was Rome' we poor average mortals know about as much as an exceptionally soft caterpillar outside a Barcelona nut knows, or is likely to know, of the kernel. As Mr. Sidgwick says, 'it is too hard' for our teeth. But to think that generation after generation of us have passed ten years of what is cynically termed 'the happiest time of life' in work that even a schoolmaster has at last acknowledged to be beyond our strength! There has been no such confession (when you come to consider it) in all the annals of remorseful Crime! Even in fiction I only remember a single parallel case, when (in 'Never Too Late to Mend') the cranks at which the wretched prisoners had to toil were found to register only half the work done. The Greek crank at which the ordinary Englishman grinds for a quarter of his existence registers nothing. The result—except for a few quotations, often as deficient in quantity as in quality—is absolutely *nil*.

I am a fool, I know—the population of England is allowed to be mostly so, and I am but one of the majority; but I give you my honour that, after eight years of Greek at school and three years of it at college, I cannot now so much as decipher the Greek letters! Year by year, the tags and remnants of that infernal language, which stuck to me like torn rags in a toothed wheel, have dropped away! The ‘aye, aye,’ ‘aye, aye’ (it sounded like that, however it was spelt) of some wailful chorus; the long-drawn epithet of some impossible hero, driven into the brain by monotonous iteration; some horrible rule (open to every exception) respecting the formation of the perfect middle—even these things, I say, thank Heaven, have ‘now utterly left me; but ‘aye, aye,’ ‘aye, aye,’ what infinite woe they cost me in their acquisition!

What seems even worse than the woe (because that has departed, while the other remains) is the hypocrisy that it has engendered in some of us. I know some men as ordinary and commonplace as myself, and I may even say as ignorant, who dare to be boastful of what they are pleased to call their classical education. They confess they have forgotten all the parrot-cries it taught them, but, with a contemptible cringing to authority (only worthy of a spy in a gaol), they pretend to agree with the Apostles of Culture in this matter. I actually heard the other day one of these traitors to our common cause protesting that ‘but for the plays of *Aesop*’ (whom he was confusing with Euripides, and for him not a bad mistake either, mind you) ‘he would never have been the man he was’—that is, he meant as to general intelligence and information. I could not help saying to him, in my blunt, simple way, ‘If you had not read Euripides (with a crib), do you really think, then, you would have been *worse*?’

The truth is, that with respect to knowledge of all kinds there is no one so utterly unprovided as your average Englishman. No allowance whatever is made by his teachers for his very scanty stock of ability; and that he will eventually be ‘a gentleman and a scholar’ is taken for granted. His feeble digestion is plied with hunks and chunks of the hardest kind, not excluding scrap-iron (*Aeschylus*). His very moderate interest in naval and military engagements is fed, though far from nourished, with accounts of Salamis and Marathon; his patriotism (which is purely insular) has Thermopylæ presented for its consideration. If I were a mathematician (which of course I am not), I could perhaps represent by some negative symbol how very little we care for Thermopylæ; no words (even of one syllable) can convey the infinitesimal character of our interest in that distant combat.

It will doubtless be asked (and in no very courteous manner),

Was there anything we *did* like at school that was good for us? Well, I am not so sure about its being ‘good for us,’ but I remember liking Lemprière’s Classical Dictionary—which I suppose, however, has been since suppressed by Lord Campbell’s Act. Or if it is asked (however impatiently), What *would* you have had taught you? I should answer, Anything we could understand and take an interest in; and if it was something that would be afterwards useful to us (at present, the last thing thought of), so much the better.

I don’t set my face against Latin. On the pier at Brighton I was quite delighted to find the other day that I could translate almost all the inscriptions—*Nox venit*, &c.—on the sundial; and I did so to the edification of quite a large crowd of excursionists. But, on the other hand, a picture of the Battle of Naseby in a print-shop puzzled me, and I in my turn had to apply to others for information. I venture to think that I ought to have been taught something, during my fourteen years’ educational servitude, of the history of my native land. As for Geography, we have had of late so many wars on hand in every quarter of the globe, that I feel quite up in that subject. The newspapers have been my textbooks. The object of the wars—about which there seems some doubt, though I am told they were undertaken for the advantage of the public—may possibly have been to supply our deficiency of information in this branch of knowledge; but if so, it was an expensive plan, and reminds one of the method (the conflagration of farmyards) by which the Chinese were introduced to the merits of roast pig.

Again, when we go abroad and find ourselves in what appears to be a menagerie of chattering and gesticulating apes (who have a trick too, also ape-like, of putting their hands in our pockets and taking out just what they like), it sometimes strikes us that if we had been taught a little French, we should find things more comfortable as well as cheaper. As to German, I frankly confess it is beyond us. Of comparative philological difficulties I know nothing, but, broadly speaking, I confidently assert that it is idle, and *the merest waste of time, to attempt to teach us any language the alphabet of which is different from our own*. I would also respectfully point out that the mathematical tutor must be uncommonly sanguine who expects us to easily master the theory of proportion: ‘the rule of three does puzzle me’ is one of the few couplets of poetry which I am in the habit of quoting, as being lucid, simple, admirably true to life, and of almost universal application. The Rule of Three is perhaps the best test of intelligence the curriculum of education affords. But the explanation of it is grossly neglected. I don’t believe one schoolboy in five

really understands it, though he may have nominally left it far behind him, and in the groves of the Binomial Theorem (if that is its habitat) have been brought face to face with the square root of minus one itself. Even I in my time have been introduced to that fabulous animal ($\sqrt{-1}$), but to tell you what I thought of him would be difficult.

Oh, editors, editors, if you would but say a word for the poor Average Intellect, and put a stop to these educational cruelties ! Paterfamilias wrote to the 'Times' the other day to complain that his young Hopeful at a public school did not know half as much as his butler's son, who was at the Board school. Why, of course he didn't ; for we only know what we can understand. At present, the scheme of Upper Class education is adapted solely for those exceptional students who are likely to turn out scholars. No provision whatever is made for the ordinary boy. He derives no more profit or pleasure from what he is supposed to learn than a man without an ear for music derives from a Wagner concert. This does not matter to the Proprietors and Professors, who are only solicitous about the admission fee ; but it matters to us immensely.

Such are our views on education. I am quite prepared to hear them denounced as worthless. But I cannot but think, since they are the views of nine-tenths of the upper-class community, and have never yet been ventilated, that they must have an interest of their own. If it prove so, I may perhaps be permitted to state the opinion of 'the unrepresented majority' upon some other subjects.

Since the above paper was written, there has been treachery in the classical camp. An eminent scholar (who may, however, be so dazed by the dead languages as not to know what he is about) has published a book called 'Greek Wit,' in English, and thereby let the British Public into the secret of what the thing really *is*, about which they have heard so much and know so little. I picture him to myself as a schoolmaster actuated by remorse, who, looking back upon an ill-spent (educational) life, determines (having sold the good-will of his Academy) to unveil the imposture of which he is no longer the instrument. That he is competent for the task he has proposed to himself there is no doubt : and in making his selections he has, it is admitted, taken the best there were to be found. Here are some specimens taken at random : 'A certain stranger came to tell Dionysius that he could instruct him privately how he might be forewarned of conspiracies against him. When introduced he said, "Give me two hundred pounds, that you may appear to have had information of the secret signs,"'

Dionysius at once gave the amount asked, that the people might suppose he had been told something important; and he thought the device a clever one.' That is, Dionysius thought so: and since Plutarch tells it us, one may suppose he thought so too. If it isn't wit, it is at least Greek wit; just as we say, 'If it is not silver, it is German silver.'

Again, Plutarch tells us that Themistocles, being asked whether he had rather be Homer than Achilles, replied, 'Would you rather be the conqueror at the Olympian games, or the Crier who proclaims the victors?' Now, if this means anything, it means that Achilles was superior to Homer; or, to change the persons, that Queen Elizabeth was greater than Shakespeare, who has immortalised her. If this is wit, it is wit only so far as it is not wisdom.

Again, 'Alcibiades, having bought a remarkably handsome dog for a large sum, cut off its tail. "This I do," said he, "that the Athenians may talk about it, and not concern themselves with any other acts of mine." ' If this was not told in Greek, and quoted as an incident of shrewdness and sagacity, one would call it a brutal practical joke with not a gleam of humour to excuse it.

Pelopidas and Leonidas, it seems, were Greek wits, and they jumped together (as wits sometimes do) in a manner that suggests something more than coincidence.

(I.) 'On one of his soldiers remarking, "We have fallen in with the enemy?" "Rather," said Pelopidas (quick as thought), "the enemy hath fallen in with us."

(II.) When someone said to Leonidas, 'The enemy are near us,' he rejoined (quite extemporaneously), 'and we are near the enemy.'

There are upwards of 400 good sayings, repartees, &c., from Plutarch, Herodotus, Lucian, *Aelian*, and a number of other ancient celebrities, in this little volume, none of which are much better or worse than those I have quoted. In the whole of Joe Miller's 'Jest Book,' which is not thought very highly of by his own countrymen, there is certainly nothing so stupid as is to be found in this volume. The excuse, indeed, that is always made for the dulness of a translation is that the ethereal essence of the original has escaped in the process of bottling from the cask. This may be so in poetry and in epigram, but not, surely, in that species of writing of which Greek wit, as the author of this work informs us in his preface, consists—namely, 'in shrewdness and intelligence, and in conveying great truths in homely fashion.' If what appears in 'Greek Wit' had first appeared in English, there would have been only one name for it—Rubbish.

Bewitched in Mid-Ocean.

I.

"Thrice the brinded cat hath mew'd."

OLD superstitions, like old religions, take a great deal of killing. About no four-footed creature have religious beliefs or superstitions clung more tenaciously than about the cat, from the feline deity of Egypt and the gaunt grimalkin of the witches, to the tame tabby of our fireside. It is difficult, however, to believe that, in this quarter of the nineteenth century and among sane Englishmen, pussy should ever be an object of fear and foreboding. Yet hear the story of my friend, the captain of the 'Seamew,' recently come into port after an unusually stormy and strange passage from Baltimore:—

"We had a capital run for several days. After dropping down the river, we gave her sheet across the cold belt of water that lies along the coast, and out we "swished" into the Stream and away along it.

""Jack," says I to my mate, who has sailed with me in the "Seamew" a many years, "home in thirty days. Eh?"

""Humph," said Jack, "maybe." Jack was a Scotchman, and cautious about an opinion.

"Well, on March 14 (I have reason to remember the date), a little after twelve o'clock, in lat. 41° north and long. 53° west (I had just taken our bearings and remember 'em), I was sweeping round with my glass careless-like when I sighted a ship on our starboard bow. I had a good look; she was a barque, and was flying signals of distress. I called Jack.

""Jack," said I, when he had looked, "what do you think? We must bear down on her, I suppose?"

""Humph," said Jack. "Ay, I suppose."

"We shortened sail and bore down. We came within hail, but nobody answered from the barque. Presently, though, a boat was launched and pulled towards us; but their pulling was weak and "dippy." Then a man stood up in the middle of the boat, tugged his coat off and waved it, and sang out, "Ahoy! Ahoy!" in a half-cracked kind of voice. This was odd, and I tramped up and down, impatient to hear what they wanted.

""We are starving!" That's what the captain that stood up in

the middle said. "We are starving," says he. "The 'Lily' of Plymouth, outward bound for Baltimore."

"We got 'em up the side. I took the master into the cabin, and sent the men for'ard. Lord! to see that man drink and eat! With a delirious eagerness, as you might say, and yet afraid to eat too fast or too much. He knew he must keep in his awful appetite, and still it would keep a-breaking from him. He told us their story in scraps between:—They had been provisioned for three months, and that was their 125th day out! The weather they had experienced had been most peculiar; not stormy, but playful and perverse-like; sometimes blowing this way, sometimes that, often not blowing at all. Near eleven weeks had gone by before they sighted Cape Henry, and when they did, down came a furious, sprawling nor'wester, and drove 'em out to sea again. And so they had beaten about in adverse winds, of course, ever since. Their last drop of water and their last scrap of biscuit went five days ago. Then they came to cooking their boots, and sucking the oil from the lamps—even from the binnacle.

"We ate my dog last!" And the poor fellow burst into tears. "As sure as fate," said he, looking oddly at me, "we have been bewitched."

"Bewitched!" said I. "What, now—what makes you think of such a thing?"

"Ah, well," said he, "I don't know. But we'll see."

After that he was in a hurry to return to his ship. We filled their boat and a boat of our own with all the provisions we thought we could spare (and there were thirteen of 'em, an awkward number to feed). Jack went with our boat, and when he came back, says he to me:

"That skipper's not a bad sort, though he be a Cardiff man. He's sent ye this keg o' spirits—and it's maybe as well out o' their way now—and, what d'ye think? four bottles o' champagne in the basket here! They had thought o' saving them for land-sight, but he's sent them to you."

We looked at the basket of champagne at once. The bottles lay sloped in, with their heads out. Underneath was a little packing-straw, and underneath that—oh, Jack's face and language when he saw it!—a tabby, a brinded cat, lying curled up asleep!

"Oh!" cried Jack. "Oh, the sly, ungrateful devil! This is your Welshman, your Taffy! This is what he thought he was bewitched wi'! And he's been afraid to make away wi' it! So he sends the witchcraft here! The coward he is! But we'll play Jonah's trick, and chance the whale."

So he seized the cat and swung out his arm to toss it over-

board; when my little Maggie, that sailed with me this voyage, and that scarce understood his words, but understood his action, caught his wrist and cried:

“Oh, no, please, Jack! Give it to me!”

“Now, Jack was very fond of her, so he arrested his act at her bidding at once; but he said, “It’s bewitched, though, Maggie lass. If I don’t believe in that sort o’ thing, there’s them here that do,” with a glance at the men for’ard.

“Ay, sir, there be,” said Dick Sandys, an old seaman who had been standing by all the while helping to haul up the boat by the davit line, and keeping, as I had observed, a sidelong eye on the basket. “There’s them aboard this here ‘Seamew,’ and I don’t say as what I ain’t one on ‘em myself, as ’ll straight off begin to think the rare luck of this here present v’yage is gone. But they’ll dread worser luck, sir, if ye throw overboard a brinded cat as has been carried aboard across water.”

“Is that so?” asked Jack.

“Yes,” said I in a low voice. “I’ve heard that before. But,” said I aloud, and looking at Dick, and trying to work off my uneasiness in a joke, “how can you have a ‘sea’ or any other ‘mew’ without a cat?”

“This cat,” said Jack, “scarcely looks as if she would mew again. Just look at her—skin and bone.”

My little Maggie had waked her up with stroking, and the wretched creature tried to stand and to walk, rubbing against Maggie’s leg. But she fell over again and again. Jack caught the animal up and sniffed her breath, while she gave him an averted look, which to me seemed almost human.

“S’elp me!” cried Jack. “If they haven’t made her drunk, so that she should come here quiet! Did ye ever see a cat like her?”

When Maggie carried the cat into the cabin, I tramped up and down the deck, more uneasy than I cared to let myself know. It was not (as I told Jack) that I was a believer in the superstitions about cats which many sailors still encourage, but because I knew what desperate work it would be, if anything should happen, to keep in hand a crew that had given themselves up.

It was getting on in the afternoon, and I was still tramping to and fro, when that cat rushed on deck, with Maggie after it. It jumped up on the bulwarks, and, looking and poking its nose over the water, *meowed*. It leaped back to the deck, and ran along towards the fo’c’sle and round the caboose, and stopped and *meowed* again. It ran back towards me, and looked round and *meowed* a third time; and its *meowing* was loud and distressful, as if it wanted to be let out or let in. Maggie followed, calling

"Puss, puss! poor pussy!" And there was I, and Jack, and farther off all the crew looking on and wondering at the creature's movements and cries. There were peculiar one-sided glances and head-shakes, I saw, exchanged by the men. To discourage any notion there might be that I also felt concern, I turned away to walk up and down as before, having first lit my pipe. What did that cat do but trot off at my heels, looking up and *meowing* with a kind of bitter greediness, as if I were the cat's-meat man!

"Catch it, Maggie," I said, "and give it something to eat."

"I've given it something, father," said Maggie, "and it won't eat it. But maybe it will now;" and she managed to seize and carry it off.

Now, standing still, I noticed that the smoke of my pipe, instead of being blown away, was curling slowly about my head, rising a little and forming a bit of cloud and then melting away straight up. I did not like these signs. There was a change working round in the weather; of which, let me tell you, the glass had given no warning.

We had been having a clear sky and a fresh breeze; the breeze fell slack, our sails flapped and "bilged," like as if in disgust, and the most curious dimness and thickness came down around the ship. I am too old a sailor to make a note of every odd change in the look of the sea or sky, but that was the oddest change I ever saw in mid-ocean. I have read a deal of poetry at sea, and I used to write home pieces to Maggie's mother, when she was alive, God bless her! and so I have always by me a sort of taste and eye for what you would call "poetic effects." Well, the effect that day as the nor'west breeze fell dead, and the sun began to go down, I shall never forget. It became very cold, and a mysterious-looking haze gathered about the ship in a circle that got always narrower and narrower, till we had not a hundred feet of clear view all round. The sea lost its briskness and ripple; it took on a dull, steely, oily look, and glided and slid about, as if it were the back of a monstrous snake. We seemed at the bottom of a pit of darkness and devilry; and the bottom we rested on was the fathomless Atlantic! All around us the encroaching haze, and rising behind and above it a dense, dark wall of cloud, touched, in the west, at its lofty broken edges with the dim glory of the setting sun, and showing a little space of pale, pure blue above, and in the east and south appearing like an inaccessible grey cliff. From the depths of this cliff seemed to come by-and-by faint laboured sighs, which gradually became wilder and prolonged themselves into wails of distress and pain. We shortened sail at once down to the lower top-sails.

'Between nine and ten I tucked my little Maggie safe into her berth, and turned in myself, though I knew it would be only for a little while. That cat I did not see anywhere about.

'I was waked suddenly by my head being bumped against the side of my berth. There was a loud report, like the going off of twenty muskets; I felt a sudden spasm as of choking; I caught at my breath and sprang to my feet. You have never been in a hurricane, I dare say? Well, when it first swoops down, it seems to shut you and the ship up with too much breath. In another minute I was on deck; the report had been the noise of a sheet blown to pieces. Jack was roaring through the trumpet, the men were shortening sail—you could just hear the sharp creak of ropes and pulleys through the wind—and that wretched cat was hid somewhere about, *meawing* its very worst. It was two in the morning; hurricane from the north-east with bitter rain, and we lay-to with the lee clew of the lower maintopsail. All on till dawn and through the day it blew and shrieked its loudest. Two men were at the wheel to keep her head up, but I knew that for all that we were driving rapidly back on our track. The drift in the air was so dense that we could not see five yards beyond the ship; and by five o'clock it was dark. About six o'clock a great sea struck our bows, carried away our head, and let a rush of water like a mill-race over our decks. We recoiled a great distance, and settled heavily in the trough of the sea. But we rose again with a shudder.

'On the second day, after daylight, the hurricane abated, though it still blew a stiff gale. But we were able to slacken something of the grim tenacity of our vigilance, and to look at each other again. I liked not the looks I met. We had passed with comparatively little damage through a terrible danger; and that would have been enough, you would have thought, to lead the sailors to think that both weather and ship were under altogether different and better guidance than the witchery of a tabby cat. Yet they looked sullen and hopeless. I could see from the way they eyed the creature, and drew off from it and its dismal *meawings*, that they were still bound by a dread of what it might bring upon them. I must confess that I myself disliked the cat, though it seemed moved to wander up and down the deck and into the cabin, and to lament as it did more by some kind of distress than from spite. Maggie was the only one who took any notice of it; and she fed it and followed it about with an unwearied devotion to which the creature did not at all respond.

'Next day, though the gale continued to abate, our plight was little improved. The "Seamew" carried herself heavily, though

we could not discover she was making water. The wind was still north-east, against which she not only made no head, but kept losing way. I was, therefore, not surprised when Jack came to me in the cabin and said,

“There’s something going on for’ard—no end o’ talk and tobacco-juice.”

‘We went on deck.

“Look at them,” continued Jack, “there by the chains. See how they shove their shoulders into each other. When a sailor does that, and pulls his own ear as Dick Sandys is doing, there’s something up. And they half-look this way. Ah, here they come.”

There were three of them, headed by Dick Sandys, shyly shouldering their way aft. Dick came pretty straight, pulling at his ear, with his eyes cast down, but with his round, ruddy face shining steadily forward; his comrades lurched about, looking from side to side, and touching things as they passed.

“Well, Dick,” said I, “you want to speak to me, I suppose, you and your mates?”

“Ay, ay, sir; if you will kindly give us a word. Me and them, sir”—jerking his thumb over his shoulder—“come as a deppytation from the fo’c’sle. We ain’t got no notion o’ dictating to the captaining, but we want to put ye in possession, sir, of what we’re a-thinking about. Eh, mates?”

“Ay, ay.”

“We see how it’s agoing to be:—This here v’yage ’ll never come to no good end. The ‘Seamew’ ’ll never again get into no harbour; and some day one on them big steamers ’ll come across her all a-rotting, wi’ not a sign o’ life aboard but a cursed striped cat in the rigging. It’s bound to live somehow;—eh, mates? Well, sir, we ain’t a-blamin’ nobody. It’s our luck, and the damned trick o’ that ‘Lily.’ That’s bound to be our luck wi’ that there cat aboard; but it’s not to be expected as how we’ll take it meek and mild. Well, ye see, sir, they say ‘worser luck if ye throw her overboard.’ Jest so. But now this is what we were a-thinking:—*Suppose we set her adrift in an old tub?*”

This dark suggestion he conveyed in a low voice, with his hand to the side of his mouth, after a glance round to make sure the cat was not within hearing. Then he looked at me with a steady wistful eye; his mates fidgeted and looked over the ship’s sides, as though they felt half-ashamed of the plot to which they had given their adherence.

I considered a moment. I had, of course, no real belief that getting rid of the cat thus would give us a fair wind; yet still it was worth trying; it involved only the sacrifice of the cat, and if

it did not change the wind, it would at least change the looks of my crew. But what would my little Maggie say? However, I turned at once to Dick.

"You can try it," said I. "I give you full leave—though, mark you, I don't believe in the nonsense. But get hold of it without my little girl seeing you."

"Ay, ay, sir."

II.

'AH, it was a bad night. The wind whistled in ropes and cords, and spars and rigging creaked wearily. The broken water every now and then came smash on our bulwarks, and swirling and hissing over us. Ah, my hearties, believe me it's better ashore than at sea! The cat was got and put into the tub, and over she went into the darkness and the rush and hiss of the mighty waters with a dreadful *meaw*, that made our flesh creep.

'I was glad I did not see the men's faces. I felt—I don't know what. Then I went aft a step or two till I was close to the wheel and looking astern. I had stood maybe a minute or more, when, lo and behold! I saw just where the glimmer of the binnacle light fell on the bulwarks, the head and the staring eyes of that cat! I dashed forward just on the impulse. It was clambering on board again.

"Down, you brute!" I cried, pushing at it. God! how it clawed into the wood! "Down, you wretch! you devil!"

'It *meawed* terribly, held on with every claw, but—yes, yes! with furious, half-terrified hands—I tore it away and flung it out. I had not noticed that the men had come about me.

"Ah! save and deliver us, sir!" said Dick at my elbow. "You've done for us now! Lord knows what'll happen!"

'In the feeble light I saw his and his companions' faces staring on me with a ghastly terror. I felt now like a fool and a criminal. Dick had barely done speaking, and I had just turned round, when a little white figure appeared. It was my little Maggie.

"Father," she whispered, "where are you? I heard my pussy *meaw*, and I can't find her. Where is she? Have you seen my pussy, father?"

"Your father has thrown her into the sea, missy," said one of the men. "And what'll come o't, God knows."

"How exasperated I was with that man! "You'd better go for'ard, you men," was all I said, however. But, before any of us had time to stir, the crest of a wave, like a great white flying mane, flung itself over and drenched us. I caught Maggie in my arms all dripping, and carried her below. She said nothing, but

looked at me in a way that cut me to the heart: her gaze was frightened and half turned away. I had no word to say for myself. I changed her night-gown and put her back in her berth. She shivered and snuggled down with her head under the bed-clothes. After a little she peeped out and said to me,

“ ‘When you are some day angry with me, will you maybe throw me into the sea?’ ”

‘I could not bear it. “Oh, Maggie, my child, my darling!” I cried, taking her in my arms; “don’t talk and look like that. The cat was a bad cat, and brought us ill-luck and bad weather.”

“ ‘I thought,’ said Maggie simply, “it was God made the weather.” I was silent. After a pause she cried, “I want my pussy back, father. Get me it back. It was not bad, and I liked it.”

“ ‘I wish, my dear,’ I said, “I could bring you it back.”

‘Was it a *meaw* I heard, and a scratching, or was it only the wind above, and the dash of the water at the port-hole? Maggie had heard it, too; she sat up, and her eyes were fixed on the port-hole. With some difficulty I pulled it open, and in scrambled the cat!

‘I was never more delighted by the sight of any living thing than I was by the return of that poor, half-drowned cat. Such a weight of guilt was lifted off me! I felt almost like a little boy again, there, with my little girl beside me. The to-do Maggie and I made over the poor, outraged creature! I confess to you truly the tears came to my eyes. Maggie kissed it and cuddled it, all wet and shivering as it was, the brave little swimmer! I went to the cook and got some hot mess for it to eat, and prepared a snug little bed before the cabin stove, and poor grateful pussy licked my hand.

“ ‘Captain! Captain!’ I heard eagerly whispered from the top of the cabin steps. I should have been on deck, and I was turning to go—after a glance at Maggie with a shawl about her sitting down by her recovered pussy—when the cook stumbled hurriedly down into the cabin, whispering in terror, “They’ve got at the spirits, captain, and they’re mad! They’ve knocked Dick down for standing up for you, and they’re sure, as you threw the cat overboard, the only way to save the ship is to throw you after it! They’re coming!”

‘And before another word could be said, or anything done, they were come. I suppose they at once suspected the cook of being informer: in a moment he was gagged and bound. I stood before them with what calmness I had; though I felt my cheek pale and my blood tingle to see all the desperate crew crowded in before me. They were not drunk; they were only primed to the Dutch-courage point: their faces were bloodshot and resolute.

"What's the meaning of this, my men?" I asked firmly.
"Mutiny?"

'At the dreaded word they quailed a little; but Bill Bowser—he who had told Maggie I had drowned the cat, and who seemed the ringleader—made a step forward and said (he was an ugly slab of a man, with something like a squint, but he could speak to the point),

"No mutiny, captain, only self-preservation, the first law o' nature. That darned cat has been thrown overboard, and to save the ship and all the rest on us you must follow it, captain, 'cause you done it."

I was about to speak, when Maggie, who looked very much surprised, but not in the least frightened, said (standing up in her sweet childish beauty, with the shawl slipping from her shoulders), "Look! pussy was in the sea, but she's come back again;" and she showed them the cat in her arms.

They were dumb-founded, and smitten with confusion. They stared at me, and at Maggie and the cat, and they shouldered towards the stair. Bill Bowser again made himself spokesman.

"I'm blest," said he, "but that cat has the devil in her, as sure as David! But look-a-here, captain, we must just set her adrift again, and tie her in this time."

"No," said I, "I won't allow a hair of that cat to be touched again. And I advise all you men to clear out of this at once, or I shall take note of it and reckon it an attempt at mutiny." I spoke in a loud, commanding tone, to rouse Jack, who was in his berth close by.

"Oh, you will, will you?" said Bowser, now snarling out the rebellious spirit natural to him, and suggestively lowering his head and drawing up his sleeve from his right wrist: I felt sure he had his knife handy. "If it's to be reckoned mutiny, it may as well be made worth the reckoning. Down with him, mates!"

I caught the gleam of the knife; I had no weapon; I threw my cap in his face, and next instant floored him with my fist. At this juncture, as if in answer to little Maggie's cry, out burst Jack, half-dressed, revolver in hand.

"Holloa! Eh? What's this?" he cried.

I took the revolver from his hand and pointed it among the men, who looked some sulky, some bewildered, but none inclined to follow Bowser's initiative.

"Now," said I, "I give you another chance. Be off at once to the fo'c'sle, or——" I clicked the trigger of the revolver.

"Ay, ay, captain," they murmured, and tumbled up to the deck

as fast as they could. "We didn't mean no harm, sir," pleaded those who were nearest me, and who were forced to linger.

"No, the lubbers! no harm! But if Bill Bowser had struck me down with his knife, they would not have moved a finger or a tongue to save me, or to keep themselves from the crimes of mutiny and murder on the high seas. Yes; that's what your merchant-seamen have come to nowadays! As for Bill Bowser, he was of course put in irons.

"Now, soon after daylight, with a nasty sea still running and the wind in the south-east, the man at the look-out sighted a barque with signals of distress flying. She was about two miles off our larboard quarter. By-and-by we signalled what was the matter. "Leaking," was the answer; "all hands at the pumps." Then he set the ship's letters, and we made out the name—what do you think?—the "Lily"! Could it be the same "Lily"—the "Lily" of Plymouth—as we had passed on our other quarter nearly a week ago? It might be; for, ye see, these hurricanes often, maybe always, work in a circle. *Cyclone*, d'ye say? Ah, yes; that's what we call them when met in the tropics. Well, we bore down on each other, and I took the opportunity of having a word or two with my men, to set myself right with them, and to make them, if I could, throw off that superstition about the cat. I called them aft.

"Now," said I, "you needn't look frightened; I'm not going to say anything about last night's affair. I agree to call it all a mistake, if you will give up your foolish, old-wives' notion about my cat here. I say *my* cat, because I am determined to take it home with me, and leave it with my little girl here. Now, look at it; hasn't it the nicest little face a cat ever had? How can ye believe there is a devil in the creature?"

"The devil," said one, "often hangs out the prettiest figure-heads, sir."

"Well," said I, "that's true. But now, you're sailors; you can't refuse shelter, and you can't surely think ill of a poor dumb creature that was twice thrown into that sea, and twice came back to the old ship, and that after all licked the hand that threw her out—ay, and—look ye!—licks it now."

"Hooray for the captain!"

"But, my hearties," said I, "there's another thing." And this was my strong point. "You see that barque out there? She's called the 'Lily,' and I believe she's the same as smuggled this cat aboard of us. Now, has she gained anything by losing the cat? When she's been caught in the same hurricane as we have, and

she's come worse out of it ; she's driven far from her course, and she's leaking dangerously."

"They turned and looked at each other and nodded ; they evidently thought there was something in it.

"We keep the cat, then," said I, "whether the 'Lily' would like it back or no. Is that agreed ?"

"Ay, ay, sir."

"It was a bad sea, but we lowered a boat as we and the 'Lily' approached ; I particularly wanted to go aboard of her. I got the basket out in which pussy had come to us, replaced her as we had found her, and put the *empty* champagne bottles on top.

The crew of the "Lily" were dropping with fatigue when we went aboard, but, Lord ! to see how the skipper and them about him woke up when they saw us. Astonishment is no word for it.

"Good God !" he exclaimed. "And you are the 'Seamew'!"

"And you are the 'Lily,'" said I. "That was a nice present you sent me. I have brought back the bottles and the basket ;" and so saying, I uncovered pussy, who, to my amazement, jumped out at once and bounded off. I had only intended to show the skipper she was there. The poor man stared, his jaw dropped, and he sank down on a coil of rope with his head in his hands, uttering a long, hopeless groan.

"Come, my friend, cheer up," I said.

"We've almost nothing to eat," said he ; "we've been at the pumps two days, and now that brute has come back ! There's no use standing by them any more ; our voyage comes to an end here, and down, down we go. We might as well have kept the beast ; the old wretch's words have come true, and *we finish in the middle*, as she said."

I doubted his mind was wandering. "Come," said I, "bestir yourself and give orders. There's no use staying by the ship any longer ; you must abandon her and come with me."

"What ! Leave the 'Lily' ? She's a good old ship, and she's my own ; no, I'll go down with her and that cursed cat. Take off the crew, sir, however, and I'll thank you."

I could not make up my mind to think him deranged, and yet —Just then the cat came bounding along the deck with something in her mouth, and all the hands paused and stared. She put it in the basket at my feet where she herself had lain, and again bounded away. It was a kitten ! and alive ! The skipper stared stupidly. Presently pussy returned with another.

"That's what's done it !" cried the skipper with gathering fury ; "after I got rid of her, they were here, and I never knew it !"

He rose in his rage, and, seizing a crowbar, would have smashed basket and all, but he was easily restrained and disarmed.

“Let me have them,” said I; “my little girl will like them.”

“What!” he cried in something like an ecstasy of gladness. “And you will take the mother too!” Then, becoming again despondent, “but it’s of no use now. I feel we are going down.”

Pussy had returned with her third kitten, which was dead, and had begun to purr with delight and to rub herself round my leg, when he roused himself and ordered all hands to take to the boats. We stood by them in our own boat (with pussy and her brood in the basket on the stern-seat), waiting to give them a towline to our ship. When all the hands were in the boats, there was a pause. Was not the skipper coming? No. “Cast off.” The “Lily” was settling down rapidly, and the crew cast off with little concern. The skipper’s last act was to launch with a curse a broken pulley-block at the basket in our stern, as we rowed off. It just missed the boat, and splashed into the sea. The “Lily” went down before we reached the “Seamew.”

Next day we had a fair wind, and our crowded ship crowded all sail and went merrily racing, dipping, and splashing for home. In our new, bright hopes of our voyage we all, I think, felt rather ashamed of our dreadful suspicions of pussy. At any rate, everyone showed the utmost tenderness and solicitation for her and her two kittens.

‘How had the kittens been kept alive on the “Lily” all that week? you ask. I don’t know; but I have heard of a rat playing the part of mother under similar circumstances, and I am certain there were rats in the “Lily.”’

J. MACLAREN COBBAN.

Strange Players.

No doubt the actor's art depends considerably upon his physical gifts and qualifications. It is not enough for him to sympathise sincerely with the character he undertakes, to feel deeply its emotions, to weep or to laugh with it, as the case may require ; he must be prepared also to represent or to personate it ; he must so express it as to render it credible, intelligible, and affecting to others. Aspect, elocution, attitude and gesture, these are the means wherewith he accomplishes his effects, illudes his audience, and wins of them their applause : these are his professional implements and symbols, and without these there can be no acting. ‘A harsh inflexible voice, a rigid or heavy face,’ Mr. G. H. Lewes has said, ‘would prevent even a Shakespeare from being impressive and affecting on the stage ;’ and the same critic has decided that unless the actor possesses the personal and physical qualifications requisite for the representation of the character he undertakes, no amount of ability in conceiving it will avail.

But, of course, stage portraiture can only be a matter of approximation : the actor has to seem rather than to be the character he performs, although it is likely that the actors themselves do not so clearly perceive this distinction. Macready enters in his diary at one place : ‘Began to read over Macbeth. Like Macleise over his pictures, I exclaim, “Why cannot I make it the very thing, the reality ?”’ At another time he writes : ‘Acted Macbeth as badly as I acted it well on Monday last. The gallery was noisy, but that is no excuse for me. I could not feel myself in the part. I was labouring to play Macbeth. On Monday last I *was* Macbeth.’ And again a little later : ‘Acted Macbeth in my best manner, positively improving several passages, but sustaining the character in a most satisfactory manner. J'ai été le personnage.’ The admired comedian Molé had a sounder view of his professional duties when he observed of one of his own performances : ‘Je ne suis pas content de moi ce soir. Je me suis trop livré, je ne suis pas resté mon maître ; j'étais entré trop vivement dans la situation ; j'étais le personnage même, je n'étais plus l'acteur qui le joue. J'ai été vrai comme je le serais chez moi ; pour l'optique du théâtre il faut l'être autrement.’

This *optique du théâtre*, in fact, with certain artifices of the toilet skilfully employed, so materially abets the player in his

efforts to portray, disguising his imperfections and making amends for his shortcomings, that it becomes a question at last as to what natural advantages he can or cannot dispense with. Is there anything, he may be tempted to ask, that positively unfits him for creditable appearance upon the scene? The stage is a wide field, an open profession, finds occupation for very many; what matters it if some of its servants present sundry physical defects and infirmities? Can absolutely nothing be done with the harsh inflexible voice? Is the rigid heavy face so fatal a bar to histrionic success? It is desirable, of course, that Romeo should be young, and Juliet beautiful; that Ferdinand should be better-looking than Caliban, and Hamlet less corpulent than Falstaff; that Lear should appear venerable, and Cæsar own a Roman nose; but even as to these obvious conditions the play-going public is usually prepared to allow some discount or abatement. No doubt, too great a strain may be placed upon public lenity in this respect. There is an old story told of the seeking of a theatrical engagement by a very unlikely candidate. It was objected that he was very short.—So, he said, was Garrick. It was charged against him that he was very ugly.—Well, Weston had been very ugly. But he squinted abominably.—So did the admirable comedian, Lewis. But he stuttered.—Mrs. Inchbald had stuttered, nevertheless her success upon the stage had been complete. But he was lame of one leg.—Mr. Foote had been very lame—in fact, had lost one of his legs. But his voice was weak and hollow.—So, he alleged, was Mr. Kemble's. But, it was finally urged against him, he had all these defects combined.—So much the more singular, he pleaded. However, the manager decided not to engage him.

Some years since a book was published entitled ‘The Lost Senses,’ which set forth how, notwithstanding grievous afflictions and physical infirmities, the writer had contrived to lead a studious, useful, and not unhappy life. How many of his faculties can an actor afford to lose? There have been mad players. The case of the Irish actor Layfield, narrated by O’Keeffe, is perhaps hardly in point. Layfield was struck with incurable madness while in the act of playing Iago to the Othello of Sheridan, and died shortly afterwards in an asylum. The first symptom of his malady is said to have been the perversion of the text of his part and his description of Jealousy as a ‘green-eyed lobster.’ And the later eccentricities of the veteran Macklin may be attributed rather to excessive senility than to absolute mental disease. We are told that, properly attired as Shylock, he entered the greenroom, where the other players were already assembled. He was about to make his

last appearance upon the stage. ‘What! is there a play to-night?’ he enquired. All were amazed; no one answered. ‘Is there a play to-night?’ he repeated. The representative of Portia said to him, ‘Yes, of course. “The Merchant of Venice.” What is the matter with you, Mr. Macklin?’ ‘And who is the Shylock?’ he asked. ‘Why, you, sir, you are the Shylock.’ ‘Ah,’ he said, ‘am I?’ and he sat down in silence. There was general concern. However, the curtain went up, the play began, and the aged actor performed his part to the satisfaction of the audience, if he stopped now and then and moved to the side the better to hear the prompter. ‘Eh, what is it? what do you say?’ he sometimes demanded audibly, as he lifted up his hair from his ear and lowered his head beside the prompter’s box.

But Reddish, the stepfather of George Canning, was decidedly a mad player. He had been dismissed from Covent Garden Theatre because of his ‘indisposition of mind,’ when, upon the intervention of certain of his friends, the management granted him a benefit. The play of ‘Cymbeline’ was accordingly announced with Reddish as Posthumus. Ireland in his biography of Henderson relates that an hour before the performance he met Reddish ‘with the step of an idiot, his eye wandering, and his whole countenance vacant.’ Congratulated upon his being sufficiently recovered to appear, ‘Yes, sir,’ he said, ‘I shall perform, and in the garden scene I shall astonish you!’ ‘The garden scene?’ cried Ireland; ‘I thought you were to play Posthumus.’ ‘No, sir, I play Romeo.’ And all the way to the theatre he persisted that he was to appear as Romeo; he even recited various of the speeches of that character, and after his arrival in the greenroom it was with extreme difficulty he could be persuaded that he had to play any other part. When the time came for him to appear upon the stage, he was pushed on, everyone fearing that he would begin his performance of Posthumus with one of Romeo’s speeches. ‘With this expectation,’ writes Ireland, ‘I stood in the pit, close to the orchestra, and being so near had a perfect view of his face. The instant he came in sight of the audience his recollection seemed to return, his countenance resumed meaning, his eye appeared lighted up, he made the bow of modest respect, and went through the scene much better than I had before seen him. On his return to the greenroom, the image of Romeo returned to his mind, nor did he lose it till his second appearance, when, the moment he had the cue, he went through the scene; and in this weak and imbecile state of his understanding performed the whole better than I ever saw him before.’ Ireland even pronounced that the actor’s manner in his insane state was ‘less assuming and more natural’ than when he had ‘the

full exercise of his reason.' Reddish was not seen again upon the stage, however; he died soon afterwards hopelessly mad, an inmate of York Asylum.

In the records of the Théâtre Français a very similar case may be found. The actor Monrose, famous at one time for his admirable personation of the character of Figaro, had been for some months in confinement because of the disordered condition of his mind. His success in Beaumarchais' comedy had in truth turned his brain. He had so identified himself with the part of the Spanish barber that he could not lay it down or be rid of it. On the stage or off, sleeping or waking, he was always Figaro. He had forgotten his own name, but he answered to that of Figaro. In conversation he was absent, appeared not to hear or not to understand what was said to him; but a quotation from the 'Barbier' produced an immediate reply, a merry laugh, a droll gesture. It was resolved that a performance should be given for his benefit, and that he should appear as Figaro upon the occasion. The house was crowded to excess. Mdlle. Rachel and all the leading players of the Français lent their services. The representation produced a profit of 18,000 francs. Dr. Blanche, the leading physician of the asylum in which the actor had been confined, was present throughout the evening, in close attendance upon his patient, soothing and encouraging him in the intervals of the performance. The anxiety both of spectators and actors was very great. The scene was described as 'exciting in the highest degree.' It was dreaded lest the actor's malady should suddenly disclose itself. The audience hesitated to applaud lest they should dangerously excite the poor man. Mdlle. Rachel was so affected that she twice lost recollection of the words she should speak, although she was appearing in one of her most favourite and familiar characters. The representatives of Rosina and Almaviva could not disguise their terror; at each word, at each gesture, of Figaro's they looked for betrayal of his insanity. It was said, however, that the actor had never played better than on this his last night upon the stage, when he was released but for a few hours from the madhouse. He sought to re-assure his friends by his ease of manner, his smiling glances, his air of complete self-possession. At one time only did he seem thoroughly conscious of the painful position in which he was placed. Towards the close of the third act of the comedy Figaro is required to exclaim three times, 'Il est fou!' We are told that at this utterance 'every heart beat with terror . . . and here, and here only, did Monrose himself seem to betray that he was aware of the truth; he spoke with increasing vehemence and with an expression of the most poignant grief.'

In the Memoirs of Mrs. Bellamy of Covent Garden Theatre it is told how an insane actress once forced her way on to the stage and represented to perfection the madness of Ophelia; but the story is not very credible. Mrs. Verbruggen—she had been known, too, as Mrs. Mountford, and in her honour Gay, it was said, had written his ‘Black-eyed Susan’—had been confined for some time in an asylum; her mind had suffered because of the perfidy of Mr. Barton Booth the tragedian, who had suddenly transferred his affections from her to the beautiful Miss Santlow the dancer. Mrs. Verbruggen was allowed considerable liberty, however, for her malady had not assumed a violent form, so that she was able with little difficulty to elude the watchfulness of her attendants and make her way to the theatre. She had ascertained that ‘Hamlet’ was to be represented; as Ophelia she had been wont to receive the most fervent applause. ‘Concealing herself till the scene in which Ophelia makes her appearance in her insane state, she pushed on to the stage before her who played the character that night, and exhibited a far more perfect representation of madness than the utmost exertions of mimic art could do. She was in truth Ophelia’s self, to the amazement of the performers as well as of the audience. Nature having made this last effort, her vital powers failed her.’

There have been blind players. In the ‘Wolverhampton Chronicle,’ December 1792, appeared a statement to the effect that one Briscoe, the manager of a small theatrical company then in Staffordshire, although stone-blind, represented all the heroes in his tragedies and the lovers in genteel comedies. In 1744, on April 2, the Drury Lane playbill was headed with a quotation from Milton: ‘The day returns, but not to me returns.’ The performances were given for the benefit of Dr. Clancy, author of the tragedies, ‘Tamar Prince of Nubia,’ and ‘Hermon Prince of Chorea,’ who had become blind. The public was duly advertised that ‘Dr. Clancy being deprived of the advantages of following his profession, the master of the playhouse had kindly favoured him with a benefit night; it was therefore hoped that, as that was the first instance of any person labouring under so heavy a deprivation performing on the stage, the novelty as well as the unhappiness of his case would engage the favour and protection of a British audience.’ The tragedy of ‘Œdipus’ was represented, and the blind man personated the blind prophet Terebias. The performance produced some profit, and Dr. Clancy was further assisted by a pension of 40*l.* per annum out of the privy purse. Imperfect sight has been no bar to success upon the stage. Even Roscius is said to have been afflicted with obliquity of vision, and

therefore to have played in a vizard, until his audience, recognising his great histrionic merits, induced him to discard his mask that they might the better enjoy his exquisite oratory and the music of his voice. The great Talma squinted. And a dramatic critic writing in 1825 noted it as a strange fact that ‘our three light comedians, Elliston, Jones, and Browne,’ each suffered from ‘what is called a cast in the eye.’ Mr. Bernard in his ‘Retrospections’ describes a provincial actor of some reputation who, although possessed of but one eye, played ‘all the lovers and harlequins.’ With shortness of sight many of our players have been troubled, or how can we account for such well-known facts, for instance, as the eye-glass of Mr. Bancroft and the *pince-nez* of Mr. Irving? Poor Mrs. Dancer—she was afterwards famous as Mrs. Spranger Barry and as Mrs. Crawford—was so short-sighted that Hugh Kelly, in his satirical poem of ‘Thespis,’ rudely spoke of her as a ‘moon-eyed idiot.’ And once when by accident she dropped her dagger as she was about to commit self-slaughter upon the stage in the old tragic way—she was playing Calista in the ‘Fair Penitent’—her imperfect vision hindered her from perceiving where her weapon had fallen, and she could not recover it. ‘The attendant endeavoured to push it towards her with her foot; this failing, she was obliged to pick it up, and very civilly handed it to her mistress to put an end to herself with: an awkward effect, as it took from the probability of the scene,’ simply comments O’Keeffe who relates the story. The late Herr Staudigl, who usually wore spectacles when he was not engaged upon the stage, found his weakness of sight a special disadvantage when he personated Bertram in ‘Robert le Diable.’ He could not find the trap-door through which Bertram should descend in the final scene of the opera, although pains had been taken to mark broadly with chalk the exact position of the opening. The famous bass was usually conducted carefully to the spot and held over it that he might not miss it by the Robert and Alice of the night. From the first, indeed, the trapdoor in ‘Robert’ had been a source of inconvenience. On the night of the production of the opera, Nourrit, who played Robert, an impassioned artist, ‘entrainé par la situation, se précipita étourdiment dans la trappe à la suite du dieu des enfers.’ The audience, much alarmed, exclaimed, ‘Nourrit est tué!’ Mdlle Dorus, the representative of Alice, shed tears. No harm had been done, however. Robert was not hurt. He had fallen upon the mattresses arranged for Bertram. ‘Que diable faites-vous ici?’ said Bertram’s interpreter Levasseur to Nourrit as they met beneath the stage. ‘Est-ce qu’on a changé le dénouement?’

The late John Baldwin Buckstone was extremely deaf;

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his infirmity scarcely affected his performance, however, if, as Mr. Tom Taylor wrote, it 'raised a wall of separation between him and all but a small circle of intimates.' His quickness of intelligence in matters of his craft was so great that he might have been closely watched not only on the stage at night but even at the morning's rehearsal without discovery being made that he could hear no word of what was passing about him. 'He was guided, in his by-play as well as in his spoken part, entirely by his knowledge of the piece acquired in reading it, and by his quick eye, which could catch much of what his stage-interlocutors said from the movement of their lips and the expression of their faces. I remember his telling me,' Mr. Taylor notes, 'that it was only by this means he knew when his cue to speak came.' An earlier actor, one Winstone, attached to the Bristol Theatre, remained upon the stage as an octogenarian although he was so affected with deafness that he could not possibly 'catch the word' from the prompter. Delivering his farewell address, he secured the assistance of one of the performers to stand close behind him, advancing as he advanced and retiring as he retired, like a shadow, and charged to prompt him should he fail in the words of his speech.

Foote presents the most remarkable instance of a one-legged player. While on a visit at Lord Mexborough's, riding a too spirited horse, he was thrown, and received so severe a hurt that his left leg had to be amputated. It was suggested at the time, 'as a marvellous proof of the efficacy of avarice,' that Foote had unnecessarily undergone amputation that he might surely enlist the sympathies of the Duke of York and by his influence obtain the Chamberlain's license for the little 'theatre in the Haymarket'; but such a supposition is wholly incredible. Foote jested, as his wont was, even under the surgeon's knife. A little while before he had caricatured, in his farce of 'The Orators,' the manner and aspect of Alderman Faulkner, the eccentric Dublin publisher, whose wooden leg had been turned to laughable account upon the stage. 'Now I shall be able to take off old Faulkner to the life,' said the satirist, when it was announced to him that the operation must be performed. But, in truth, he felt his misfortune acutely; he suffered deeply both in mind and body. He wrote pathetically of his state to Garrick: 'I am very weak, in pain, and can procure no sleep but by the aid of opiates. Oh! it is incredible all I have suffered.' After an interval he reappeared upon the stage, however, the public finding little abatement of his mirthfulness or of his power to entertain. But, as O'Keeffe writes, 'with all his high comic humour, one could not help pitying him sometimes as he stood upon his one leg leaning against the wall whilst his servant

was putting on his stage false leg, with shoe and stocking, and fastening it to the stump ; he looked sorrowful, but instantly resuming all his high comic humour and mirth, hobbled forward, entered the scene, and gave the audience what they expected, their plenty of laugh and delight.' He wrote his comedy of 'The Lame Lover' as it were to introduce his false leg to the public, and as Sir Luke Limp protested that he was not the worse but much the better for his loss. 'Consider,' he urged, 'I can have neither strain, splint, spavin, nor gout ; have no fear of corns, kibes, or that another man should kick my shins or tread on my toes. . . What d'ye think I would change with Bill Spindle for one of his drum-sticks, or chop with Lord Lumber for both of his logs ? What is there I am not able to do ? To be sure, I am a little awkward at running ; but then, to make me amends, I'll hop with any man in town. . . . A leg ! a redundancy ! a mere nothing at all. Man is from nature an extravagant creature. In my opinion, we might all be full as well as we are with but half the things that we have !'

Charles Mathews the elder, though he did not incur the loss of a limb, was thrown from his carriage and lamed for life. When he was enabled to return to the stage, he re-appeared leaning upon a crutch stick and personating a lame harlequin in a comic extravaganza entitled 'Hocus Pocus, or Harlequin Washed White,' designed especially for his re-introduction to the public. Some few years since Signor Donato, a one-legged dancer, appeared in the course of a Covent Garden pantomime, and surprised the audience by the grace and agility he displayed, his mutilated state notwithstanding. He wore the dress of a Spanish bull-fighter, and to the stump of his leg a tassel was affixed, so that it resembled somewhat an old-fashioned sofa cushion. In his 'Retrospections of the Stage' Mr. Bernard describes a veteran manager who, though bent with age and afflicted with gout in all his members, delighted to represent the heroes of light comedy. He was unable to walk or even to stand, and throughout the performance had to remain seated in his easy chair, his lower limbs swathed in flannels, and to be wheeled on and off the stage as the circumstances of the play required. He endeavoured to compensate for these drawbacks by taking large pinches of snuff very frequently, and by energetically waving in the air a large and dingy pocket-handkerchief. In this way he would represent such characters as Plume, the vivacious hero of Farquhar's 'Recruiting Officer,' to audiences that were certainly indulgent and tolerant if they were not enthusiastic.

One of Mr. George Vandenhoff's 'Dramatic Reminiscences' relates to a one-armed tragedian he encountered in 1840 on the

stage of the Leicester Theatre. The poor man's left arm, it seems, 'had been accidentally shot off,' nevertheless he appeared as Icilius, as Pizarro, and as Banquo; concealing his deficiency now with his toga, now with his mantle, and now with his plaid. Mr. Vandenhoff writes: 'I had really not noticed the poor fellow's mutilation, though I had observed that he seemed rather one-sided in his action, till I played Othello to his Iago; and then what was my horror, on seizing him in the third act, to find that I had got hold of an armless sleeve stuffed out in mockery of flesh, for he did not wear a cork arm! I was almost struck dumb, and it was only by a strong effort that I recovered myself sufficiently to go on with the text. Poor fellow! he was a remarkably sensible man and good reader; but of course he could never rise in his profession with only one arm.' Art might have helped him, however, as it helped the late M. Roger, the admired French tenor, to a mechanical hand when by the accidental bursting of his gun his own natural right hand was so shattered that immediate amputation above the wrist became absolutely necessary. By touching certain springs with the left fingers the artificial right hand performed several useful functions, opened and closed, held a pen or paper, grasped and even drew a sword from its sheath. Those uninformed upon the subject might have witnessed the performances of the original John of Leyden in Meyerbeer's 'Prophète,' and never have suspected the loss he had sustained. By a similar accident the English comedian John Bannister injured his left hand, and for some time it was feared that amputation must be undergone. The actor, however, escaped with the loss of two joints from two of his fingers and one joint from a third; this involved his always appearing on the stage afterwards with a gloved hand. In Anthony Pasquin's Life of Edwin the comedian there is an account of a 'barn-door actor,' boasting the strange name of Gomea, who having lost an eye wore a glass substitute, and was further troubled in that he had been deprived of the use of his left arm, which paralysed and withered hung down uselessly at his side. Nevertheless he contrived to play Richard the Third occasionally, when he endeavoured to keep his lame limb out of the way tucked under his cloak behind him. But as he stalked about and spoke his speeches, the pendant arm shifted its position, came into sight, swung forward and incommoded him greatly, to be 'instantly and unkindly slapped back into its place by the right hand.' Throughout the performance, indeed, his right hand was found to be constantly engaged in keeping his left in order; the spectators, meantime, greeting with laughter and applause this

curious conduct on the part of the strangest Richard that could ever have been seen upon the stage.

Old age, it need hardly be said, is no disqualification to the player. Curious cases of longevity abound upon the stage. It is almost a condition of the actor's life that he shall be old and seem young. What does the artist's age matter if his art does not grow old? As one of the characters observes in the comedy of 'Confidant par Hazard'—‘*Mon acte de naissance est vieux, mais non pas moi.*’ A youth of twenty was charged with being in love with the septuagenarian actress Déjazet. He denied it, but his blushes seemed to contradict his denial. ‘Oh!’ said Nestor Roqueplan, an elderly gentleman, but a few years the junior of the lady, ‘il n'y a pas de mal à cela ; et vous avez tort de vous en défendre. Quand je l'ai aimée, j'avais votre âge !’ The famous French actress Mdlle. Mars at sixty was still accepted by the Parisian public as an admirable representative of stage heroines of sixteen. The English actress, Mrs. Cibber, advanced in years, studying through her spectacles the part of Cælia in ‘The School for Lovers’ declined the proposition made to her that Cælia’s age should be altered and advanced from sixteen to twenty-three. The old actress preferred that Cælia should be as young as possible; and at night the audience confirmed her judgment and held that Mrs. Cibber was no older than the part represented her to be. Mrs. Cibber, however, had preserved a certain youthful grace and slenderness and symmetry of figure; this was not the case with Mdlle. Mars, whose form had become robust and portly—‘square-built,’ to adopt the term employed by Captain Greinow, who, while admiring the actress’s ‘fine black hair and white and even teeth and voice of surpassing sweetness,’ noted that ‘the process of dressing her for the stage was a long and painful one, and was said to have been done by degrees, beginning at early dawn, the tightening being gradually intensified until the stage hour, when the finish was accomplished by the maid’s foot being placed in the small of the lady’s back, and thus the last vigorous haul being given to the refractory staylace.’ The fat have been usually received with complacency and indulgence by the playgoing public, however. Is not the well-rounded form of Mdlle. Croizette always cordially welcomed to the stage of the Théâtre Français? A German gentleman visiting England some sixty years ago questioned whether there existed in any other European theatre ‘so many untheatrical female figures’ as on the London stage. ‘The managers,’ wrote this caviller, ‘appear to have made it their object to blend together the two extremes of emaciation and corpulence, with a manifest partiality, however, to the latter. That class of

women who are not improperly termed in Germany "female dragoons," seem here considered as the most suitable recruits.' And he comments upon the 'monstrous absurdity of the performance by Mrs. Jordan, a dame of forty with a portly figure and lusty proportions, of the character of Miss Lucy, a country girl of sixteen who takes delight in playing with her doll in the form of "The Virgin Unmasked." ' But the Londoners 'liberally remunerated her with the most enthusiastic applause.' For poor Mdlle. Mars a hint came at last that she was lagging superfluously upon the scene, and that she had outlived the favour and the indulgence of her public. Even while certain of her admirers continued to maintain that 'Mdlle. Mars à l'âge qu'elle a besoin d'avoir, parce qu'elle a la force et la grâce de cet âge,' a wreath not of live flowers but of *immortelles* such as adorn graveyards was thrown to her upon the stage. The actress withdrew from the scene. The insult may have rather expressed an individual opinion than a general sentiment; but it sufficed. Audiences rarely permit themselves thus to affront their favourites; albeit it is told of a very plain-faced actor that when he played Mithridate, at the line addressed to him by Monime, 'Seigneur, vous changez de visage,' the parterre would sometimes cry out, 'Laissez-le faire !'

'Mislike me not for my complexion,' says the black Prince of Morocco. Is the player ever misliked for his complexion? Like a good horse, a good actor may be of any colour. Lord Byron found at Venice in 1818 an Othello who for some 'exquisite reason' declined to assume 'the shadowed livery of the burnished sun,' and played the part with a white face—but this was in Rossini's opera, not in Shakespeare's tragedy. 'They have been crucifying Othello into an opera,' wrote Byron, 'the music good but lugubrious,' &c. Jackson, in his 'History of the Scottish Stage,' mentions an actress reputed to be 'not only excellent as to figure and speaking, but remarkably so as to singing,' who was wont to appear as Juliet and Polly in 'The Beggar's Opera,' but who had the misfortune to be a negress! Foote proposed that the old Roman fashion should be revived and that the lady should wear a mask, while it was remarked that, in the case of a black Juliet, Romeo's comparison of her beauty to the 'rich jewel in an Ethiop's ear' would have a special application. Jackson passing through Lancashire had witnessed the lady's performance of Polly. He writes: 'I could not help observing to my friend in the pit, when Macbeth addressed her with "Pretty Polly, say," that it would have been more germane to the matter had he changed the phrase to "Sooty Polly, say."'

Mr. Ira Aldridge, who was pleased to call himself the African Roscius, and who for some years flourished as a tragedian, was a veritable negro born on the west coast of Africa, the son of a native minister of the Gospel. It was intended that the boy should follow his father's calling and become a missionary; for some time he studied theology at an American college and at Glasgow University, obtaining several premiums and a medal for Latin composition. But in the end he adopted the profession of the stage, appearing at the Royalty Theatre in the east of London and at the Coburg, in a round of characters of a dark complexion such as Othello, Zanga, Gambia, Oroonoko, Aboan, and Mungo. He fulfilled various provincial engagements, and at Dublin his exertions were specially commended by Edmund Kean. At Belfast Charles Kean played Iago to Mr. Aldridge's Othello and Aboan to his Oroonoko. He appeared at the Surrey Theatre, at Covent Garden, and the Lyceum. The dramatic critic of the '*Athenæum*' in 1858 particularly noticed one merit of his performance of Othello; he dispensed with the black gloves usually worn by Othellos of the theatre and displayed his own black hands, with 'his finger-nails expressively apparent.' He travelled upon the Continent, and was received with enthusiasm in the theatres of Germany. Princes and people vied in distinguishing him, crowded houses witnessed his performances, and honours, orders and medals were showered upon him. He extended his repertory of parts, playing Peruvian Rolla, who was no doubt dark-skinned but not of African complexion. By-and-by he exhibited a black Macbeth, a black King Lear. For him was revived the doubtful play of '*Titus Andronicus*', and he personated Aaron the Moor to admiring audiences. On the German stage, strange to say, he was permitted to deliver the English text while his fellow-players were confined to the German version of their speeches. However, the audiences of New York and Boston were similarly tolerant in the case of the German tragedian Herr Bogumil Dawison, who played Othello in German to Mr. Edwin Booth's Iago in English.

Many foreign players have appeared successfully upon the English stage speaking English or broken English. More rarely have English actors ventured to speak from the stage in a language not their own. In the last century, however, Mr. Bellamy, with a company of English amateurs who 'spoke French like natives,' presented the tragedies of '*Andromaque*', '*Athalie*', and '*Zaire*' in French at the Richmond Assembly Rooms, expressly engaged and fitted up for the occasion, some assistance being rendered by the Marquis de Verneuil and Madame Brilliant. Junius Brutus Booth, whose 'knowledge and accent of the French tongue' an American

critic describes as ‘simply perfect,’ played ‘Oreste’ in French, when ‘Andromaque’ was produced at the French theatre, New Orleans, ‘in a manner to rouse the wildest enthusiasm.’ Curiously enough, Macready had contemplated the same feat with Rachel for his Andromaque or his Hermione; but he abandoned the notion, satisfied that, although he might succeed in conveying the substance and passion of the scenes, the minor beauties and more subtle meaning belonging to the genius of the language would certainly escape him. It may be added that, within the last few months, certain English performers have amused themselves by joining in a representation in French of Augier’s comedy ‘L’Aventurière’ at the Prince of Wales’s Theatre.

We have wandered from our theme a little. But perhaps it has been shown sufficiently that the physical qualifications of the players have been always regarded liberally by the public, and that generally there has prevailed a disposition to accept just what the stage has been prepared to tender, without subjecting it to anything like harsh requisitions or exactions.

DUTTON COOK.

The Countess Felicita's Discovery.¹

V.

WHILE the first impress of this dream was yet strong upon me, I had no other thought than to go straight to Carlyon, and relate it to him. But it was still early morning ; and by the time I had completed my toilet and eaten my breakfast I had begun to look at the matter from a more common-sensible point of view. A dream is only a dream, after all ; and that which appears terrible to the sleeper may wear a different complexion when reviewed by daylight. Moreover, the waking mind is apt to give to the disordered events of a dream a logical sequence and precision which were probably in reality wanting to them ; and finally, the familiar facts of every-day life—the chairs and tables, the view from the window, the rattle of vehicles in the street, and the voices of men and women—all tend to make the vision of the night more unsubstantial than a thought. By ten o'clock, accordingly, I had resolved to forego my intention of bursting headlong in upon Carlyon with a tale of horror and warning ; I even doubted whether I would attempt to see him at all previous to his departure ; or, if I should do so, and the story of the dream were to come up, I would tell it from the humorous point of view, leaving Carlyon to draw from it what conclusions he pleased.

In this convenient frame of mind I sat down to smoke my morning cigarette over my Saturday newspaper. In the midst of that employment Carlyon himself came in. He appeared to be in excellent spirits, and the vigour and liveliness of his aspect put in a ridiculous light my misgivings of the night before.

'Don't disarrange yourself, my dear fellow,' he said ; 'I can stop only a moment. I expect to start by this evening's train. You will find the studio all right for you, if you should want to go there at any time. I have got the duplicate pass-key from my old housekeeper, so you must be careful not to lose yours, or you will be locked out till I come back.'

'You are certain you won't stay over Sunday ?' I could not help saying.

'Not so far as I am aware at present,' he answered, without any symptom of comprehending my drift. 'I want to be at my destination not later than Wednesday. That fresh atmosphere will

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clear away the cobwebs that have been entangling my wits of late. Such sloughs of despond as you saw me wallowing in yesterday must be abandoned for good and all. When you next see me, you shall behold a transfiguration.'

'Have you any messages that I can deliver for you?'

'There are some friends of mine to whom I might wish to leave a parting word,' said Carlyon, with an ambiguous smile; 'but as they don't happen to be people you know, and as the message would be the reverse of complimentary, it is no matter.'

'Well, may you return safe and sound!' said I.

'If one could leave the greater part of himself behind him on a journey, or at least such a bundle of his more disreputable belongings as Christian carried on his shoulders, what a wholesome thing our holiday jaunts would become, and how at a loss our friends would be to recognise us when we came back!' Carlyon remarked. 'If returning safe and sound means returning with as heavy a weight of moral adipose tissue as you started with, it is hardly so friendly a wish as it was meant to be. But I am wasting your time and spending too much of my own. I didn't want to leave you with such an impression of me on your mind as you must have got yesterday. Think of me as you see me now, and forget my metaphysical hypochondriasis!'

'We have known each other a good many years, my dear Carlyon,' I replied; 'and my impressions of you are not detached, but composite. I fancy nothing could greatly modify it either way. Your lights and shadows, as I have become accustomed to see them, make your reality to me, and I could hardly imagine you apart from any of them. I don't think I should even care to see you transfigured until I had become transfigured myself.'

'Upon the whole, that is as comfortable a thing as you could have said to me,' he remarked; 'and yet it tempts me a little to put you to the test with some confession or other—I don't say with one that would tend towards the transfiguration!' He paused a few moments, looking at me with a doubtful expression. 'No,' he went on, 'no; I won't risk it—at any rate, not now, when I shall not be in the way of relieving you, for a month to come, of any bad impression you might get from it. It's enough if I hold it over you for a future occasion. For the present, let the lights and shadows remain as they are!'

He laughed, grasped my hand with more than usual heartiness, and went out. I was left to resume my communion with my morning paper. But, if I remember aright, I did not read any more that day. I went to the club for my lunch, and stayed there till evening. At ten o'clock I repaired to Mrs. Blessington

Wagner's, where I half expected (it being a musical evening) that I might meet the Countess Felicita. But she was not there, and I came home tired and rather depressed.

I do not ordinarily attend church, and Sunday is apt to be rather a long day with me. But on this occasion it happened to come across me that the Countess had promised to sing the anthem at a certain fashionable church not far from my abode; so I betook myself thither, and sat in a retired pew and listened to her grand contralto voice—one of the most touching and stirring voices I have ever heard. In the afternoon I was enterprising enough to go down to her modest little house in Chelsea to call on her, but she was not at home. I left my card, and strolled eastwards along the bank of the river. Once I fancied I caught a glimpse of my faithless little friend Max; but before I could confirm my impression a knot of half-t tipsy fellows got in the way. When they had passed, the only justification for it that I could discover was a hideous little wretch in a soiled and ragged flannel shirt, who stared up at me with a pair of pale, red-rimmed eyes, set in a thin, grimy little face. All of a sudden he uttered a shrill howl, and bolted down a crooked alley opening out of the main thoroughfare.

My rest for the two last nights had been rather disturbed, and I anticipated nothing better for the third; but my expectation was not verified. I slept soundly and dreamlessly, and did not awake till after my usual hour. There was an improvement in my spirits also; I felt as if some tedious suspense or anxiety had come to an end. I made up my mind to visit the studio during the day and look over a collection of etchings which I knew Carlyon kept in a drawer of his ebony cabinet. As I proposed to spend several hours in the inspection, I put a little bundle of sandwiches in my pocket—wine I knew I should find on the premises. It was about noon when I unlocked the door with the pass-key Carlyon had given me, and went upstairs.

The door of the studio stood ajar, and when I entered I found that the green shade of the main window was drawn, so that the room seemed quite dusky. The air, too, was close and oppressive. I pulled up the blind, and then went to the small window in the alcove, which I opened at top and bottom. Having thus relieved the gloom and freshened the atmosphere, I turned to the cabinet. It was a handsome piece of furniture, standing against the wall at the end of the room farthest from the door. The upper part consisted mainly of folding-doors opening on shelves; in the panels were set mirrors of plate-glass with bevelled edges. At the sides was a sort of light scaffolding of brackets supported on slender

carved pillars, each bracket bearing a small vase of some quaint design. The lower portion of the cabinet was a chest of solidly-made ebony drawers, with curiously-wrought brass handles. It was in the upper one of these drawers that the etchings were kept.

I pulled it open, and, seating myself before it, began to examine the collection. They were mostly the work of the older masters ; among them were a number of very rare and exquisite prints of Rembrandt. I was especially struck by one plate representing three trees standing close together, their thick foliage intercepting the light of the bright sky behind, which streams in mellow lustre through the spaces between their trunks. While studying it, my eye was attracted to the edge of the paper, on which appeared a peculiar dark stain. It was neither black nor brown, and was evidently not caused by ink, as I had at first supposed. It was not even quite dry, and the paper around it was slightly wrinkled, the result of the unequal contraction occasioned by moisture. For some reason, this spot fascinated me ; I was repelled by it, but was thereby only the more impelled to scrutinise it. What could have caused it ? There was nothing to answer the question in the thing itself ; but I presently bethought me to investigate the drawer. Stuffed away in one corner, corresponding to that part of the paper which had been stained, I immediately discerned what I took to be one of Carlyon's painting-rags, such as he used to wipe his brushes upon or smear his canvas. It was clewed up in a small bundle, scarcely so large as a clenched fist, and so much discoloured that its original whiteness was scarcely distinguishable. Taking hold of it gingerly by its least soiled part, I drew it forth and held it up to the light. Its folds stuck together with a kind of glutinous tenacity ; the colouring-matter with which it had been saturated was still partially wet ; here and there it had a faint glisten, and in one place where the light partially shone through the fabric the hue was of a deep clouded red. What could have possessed Carlyon to put a rag in this condition into a drawer full of priceless etchings ? It could not have been there long—hardly longer than since the day before. But on that day Carlyon had expected to be on his way to Norway. Yet, who could have placed it here if Carlyon had not ? I looked at it more closely, with a quickened beating of the heart. A strange odour, resembling no other odour in the world, now became perceptible. I recognised it at once, and it swept me to the conviction against which I had from the first been unconsciously struggling. It was the smell of human blood.

The moisture left my mouth and throat, and there was a flut-

tering of the nerves in my head nearly resulting in faintness. But in a minute or two I got the better of my weakness, reminding myself that either there was worse to come, in which case I should need all my self-control—or else this was all, and in that case it was nothing worth disturbing oneself about.

I unfolded the rag—which appeared, so far as I could judge, to be, not a rag, but a small handkerchief of fine make and material, probably cambric. One corner of it had been either torn or cut away. It was heavy with blood; so much could not have flowed from any ordinary wound. My mind had now, in self-defence as it were, adopted a strictly logical humour; all imaginative speculations were rigidly suppressed, my determination being to take nothing for granted until sensible evidence had assured me of its truth. If anything disastrous had happened, it must have happened within the four walls of this studio, and I should inevitably come upon further traces of it in due time.

Having laid the handkerchief across the edge of the open drawer, I prepared to rise from my chair to begin my exploration of the room. I was encouraged to think that the worst thing discoverable could not be there, because, had it been there, I could hardly have escaped noticing it on my first entrance. But an instant's recollection admonished me that the blinds had then been drawn, not only obscuring objects in the studio, but causing me to confine most of my attention to setting the blind to rights.

As these thoughts strayed across my brain I was sitting facing the mirror in one of the panels, and my eyes were dwelling upon its surface, on which was a tiny round spot, like a silver globule, caused, I suppose, by a bubble of air in the glass. It stood out distinctly against the darkness of the reflected room behind it—not that the room was really dark any longer, but it seemed so in the mirror. Moving my head a little, however, I brought the globule into line with a lighter portion of the background—so light that I thought it must be a bit of white cloth hung over the back of a chair. For the first time, I now looked past the surface of the mirror into its depths. The white object was very white, and it appeared to rest on the back of a chair, but it was not a bit of cloth. It was oblong in shape, and had two darker spots upon it. I strained my eyes further.

All at once, with a spasm of sharp astonishment, I knew that this white object was the face of Carlyon, who was sitting in a chair and apparently returning my gaze. In the instant of recognising him I also realised how profoundly I had foreboded calamity the instant before, and the revulsion was staggering. In the same breath of time I was irritated against my friend for

being, whether intentionally or not, the cause of my having had such a scare. I did not look round at him, therefore ; but sinking back in my chair I said sulkily, ‘ Well, Carlyon ! ’

My voice sounded thin and hollow in the lofty room ; and there was no response whatever from Carlyon. After a moment my feeling of relieved irritation—if I may so call it—vanished as suddenly as if it had been snatched away by some spiritual hand. The feeling which occupied its place was one of alert horror, such as I cannot describe. I slowly sat up again in my chair, and once more looked into the mirror. There was a slight tremor in my head not to be controlled, and which rendered distinct vision difficult ; but I could see that Carlyon’s face was set in an odd and very awkward attitude—it was tipped over towards his right shoulder in such a way that it reminded me of the grotesque contortion of some grimace-making clown at a pantomime. But the clown’s contortion was momentary, whereas Carlyon had retained his present attitude certainly for several minutes, and possibly for longer . . . very much longer. The whole figure, as well as I could discern it in the glass, had a rigid twist in it, much at variance with Carlyon’s customary poses of robust grace. One of his hands seemed to be clenched, and partly raised from the arm of the chair. But the attitude of the head was the most unnatural of all.

I was humouring myself—struggling to withstand the inrush of the truth until I could gain time to face it resolutely. But the sensation that the thing I dreaded was behind me, and, as it were, staring over my shoulder, became at this point unendurable. I got up from my chair with a start, turned round, and with measured but leaden steps walked up to the seated figure and steadied myself to look at it.

The ungainly immobility of death is hideous to contemplate. Its unstudied effects, its unshrinking sincerity, put life to the blush. The soul, as if to show its contempt for the carcase it has ceased to inhabit, throws it at parting into some antic attitude of forlorn abjectness that would excite ridicule were it not so unaffectedly ghastly. As I looked at the body, I was sensible of a feeling of shame for my friend’s sake ; it was as if some malignant enemy of his had, in his absence, set up this dishonourable scarecrow effigy of him by way of satirising the real man’s conspicuous and perhaps not unconscious physical picturesqueness. And the worst of the jest was that Carlyon would never return to efface the absurd impression of him thus created. Neither, however, would he ever know how vilely he had been traduced.

But I forced down the hysterical mood that threatened to gain possession of me, and set myself to examine the body. The chair

in which it was seated was drawn up to the little tea-table which I have already once or twice mentioned ; there was a vacant chair on the opposite side of the table, suggesting the idea that some person had been conversing with him first, previous to the catastrophe. Upon the table was a silver ash-receiver, with a half-smoked cigarette lying in it. Another object was there—an open razor, the handle of which was smeared with blood, though the blade had apparently been wiped nearly clean. It was one of Carlyon's own razors, for there was his name engraved upon a silver plate set in the handle. There were no traces of a struggle; the body, though somewhat contorted, as I have said, could not have risen from its seat before death overtook it. It lay back, with one leg stretched out, and the head twisted back and sideways towards the shoulder, which was spasmodically drawn up. The eyes were wide open and the eyebrows lifted ; the set teeth were visible through the parted lips. Across the throat was a deep clean cut, separating the jugular artery and dividing the windpipe. A great effusion of blood had taken place, drenching the collar and neck-scarf, and flowing down into the shirt-front. There were no other wounds ; but evidently that one had been sufficient.

I cast my eyes about the room, in search of whatever traces of the murderer might present themselves. But everything seemed to be in its proper place. Upon the rug in front of the fireplace, however, I noticed two or three scraps of torn paper, and upon the hearth below the empty grate a number of similar scraps had seemingly been burnt. I picked up the largest of the unconsumed scraps and examined it ; it had only one complete word written upon it, and that was the name of a town in Holland—Amsterdam. The handwriting was Carlyon's.

There was nothing further that I could do ; the only further thing to be done was to discover the murderer, and the task of doing that devolved upon others than I. My duty now was to apprise the police of what had occurred, and let them set about their work, with the assistance of such information and suggestions as I might find it possible to afford them. Before leaving the studio I returned to the remains of the man I had loved, and contemplated them attentively for a long time. The first nervous agitation had passed away from me, and I was glad to remark how little the dead reminded me of the living. The effigy was a poor one ; many a modern caricaturist, methought, would have succeeded better. Carlyon, my friend, had been a being quite different from this. My eyes fell upon the remnant of the cigarette ; I picked it up and put it in my cigarette-case, for it recurred to my memory how I had seen it in my dream two nights previous—a dream which

I was now disposed to regard as prophetic. A few minutes later I had closed the street-door behind me, and was hastening along the road in search of a policeman. Having met with one, and told him briefly what had occurred, I despatched a telegram to Scotland Yard and then accompanied the officer back to the studio.

VI.

THE murder of a man like Carlyon Drake was not so every-day an occurrence that it could fail to throw society into something like a panic ; and, happening as it did in the height of the London season, there was no lack of discussion about it. The newspapers had their articles—moral, historical, and philosophical, together with minute details of the circumstances under which the body was found and the efforts which the police were making to discover the criminal. My own unlucky name of course figured prominently wherever reference was made to the affair ; and I believe that not a few of my acquaintances imbibed the idea that there was good reason to suspect me of being the murderer. It required all my determination not to leave London at once. At this juncture I received a note from the Countess Felicita, the purport of which afforded me the first gleam of comfort I had enjoyed since the calamity had taken place.

' Dear friend,' wrote the Countess, ' I have a closer interest in the terrible topic which is now being everywhere discussed than most people know. I met Mr. Carlyon Drake several years ago on the Continent, when he did me a kindness which I shall never forget. Since that time I had seen nothing of him ; and though, when I came to London, I hoped that we might meet each other at the house of some common friend, that did not happen, and I was unwilling to seem to force myself upon his notice. I was not aware until a day or two ago that you were so intimately his friend. I wish you would come here and speak to me about him ; I also have something to say. I found your card here the other day, so you must know where I live. I shall be at home to-morrow evening after seven o'clock, if you can come.

' Very cordially yours,
' FELICITA LABINSKI.'

I have not as yet had an opportunity to do more than allude to the Countess Felicita. My acquaintance with her, although not of long standing, was a fact of no trifling moment to me ; for I had found her to be a woman who was capable of affording, to a

mature and somewhat fastidious man of the world like myself, a companionship for which I had cause to be morally and intellectually grateful. Very few of this type of women, I suppose, exist ; the combination of qualities necessary to their evolution is very rare. Though essentially and inwardly feminine, they must possess a masculine breadth and elasticity of mind ; and there should be a vein of sympathetic kindliness, not incompatible with an arch and subtle kind of wit, in all their manifestations. Such women must have had a varied and genuine experience of life, which they will use as a magic wand to touch into significance and relief the subject of the moment. What particular form of religious belief they hold is of small import, provided its tenets constitute the real basis, impulse, and criterion of their lives—mere scepticism fatally unsexes the woman who in other respects may be all loveliness. Furthermore they should possess, and dare to use, the power of compelling men to forget their external charms in the enjoyment of that spiritual correspondence of beauty which is neither intellect nor education, but rather a graceful conformation and behaviour of both. To this end, however, it is desirable on all accounts that their physical attractions should not be too poignant ; a moderate comeliness is quite sufficient, but I apprehend that genuine homeliness is the best of all. The man is then relieved of the conventional obligation to be complimentary, and the woman from the distraction of expecting compliments, and both are as much at ease as, and yet under a much finer social stimulus than, either could be in the company of his or her own respective sex.

To return to the Countess. She was a woman certainly not less than thirty years old, and probably not more than thirty-five. What her nationality was I did not know ; her husband had been a Pole, and she spoke English with ease and accuracy. Her marriage was understood to have taken place at a comparatively early age, but she soon became a widow under somewhat tragic circumstances. She subsequently lived in Paris and in Berlin, and was on a familiar footing with the people best worth knowing in both capitals ; and she was believed to be acquainted with the inner history of many of the chief political movements of the day. At the outbreak of the Franco-German war, her sympathies were on the French side. She travelled with the army in the capacity of nurse, and appears to have been the object of the same kind of affection among the soldiers that Florence Nightingale inspired at the Crimea fourteen years before. There were many anecdotes of her courage and devotion. She was in Paris at the epoch of the Commune, and afterwards she lived for a time in Italy. When I first met her, a few months previous to the date of which I am now

writing, she had not been in London above a year; her fortunes were at a low ebb, but she was bravely supporting herself by the exercise of her extraordinary talent for music. She had sung in the choirs of more than one church, set numberless songs to music, and instructed pupils. Meanwhile, by dint of the sterling value of her mind and talents, and by a pleasant and unassuming geniality of manner, she made and kept many warm friends among both the men and women of the best English society. Such is a brief synopsis of so much as was generally known of what would seem to have been a noble and self-sacrificing life, deeply tinged with sadness and misfortune, but never losing heart or forfeiting the respect of honourable people.

For my own part, however, I had never concerned myself much with the Countess Felicita's past career. My theory was that a human being is worth to me exactly as much as I find in her or him, and that to allow my opinion of one whom I have made my friend to be influenced by the echoes, good or bad, of her previous history would be tantamount to resigning the possibility of contracting any secure and independent friendship at all. In the Countess Felicita I saw a woman to whom I could express those shy thoughts that reside in the best and most really enlightened parts of a man's mind, assured that they would be received by her kindly and comprehendingly, and would call forth from her a responsive and suggestive train of reflections and remarks. Her influence upon me, from our very first encounter, had been at once soothing and awakening; her receptiveness enabled me to reveal to her whatever small stores of wisdom or avenues of speculation I had lighted upon, while her comments had virtue in them to throw a fresh light on my subtlest and most novel ideas. She really knew more of my true character and impulses than any other woman, or any man either, has ever known; and in return I could flatter myself that I had obtained a deeper insight than most of her friends into the motives and conclusions of her own conduct of life. Let it not be inferred, however, that our conversations always or often took a personal turn; on the contrary, it was very seldom that either of us attempted to introduce—save in the way of illustration—any definite facts or particular persons wherewith the chances of existence had brought us into contact. Our intercourse was carried on upon a higher plane than that of the individual; and our pleasure in it depended upon this condition. There was something more than friendship in my regard for the Countess Felicita; but if it had never kindled into love, it was because she had avoided offering, as much as I had shunned seeking, any passionate grounds of sympathy. The bloom of the world was something sullied for both of us; and I

had not had confidence to try, with the jaded pinions of forty years, the romantic flights which had failed at twenty-seven.

Nevertheless, had I happened to think about the matter, I might have perceived that the Countess was quite as capable as she had ever been of winning a man's whole heart. Handsome she certainly was not; I should rather say she was noticeable for a wholesome and intelligent style of ugliness. It was a likeable and interesting ugliness; the parts were good, though the combination was eccentric. She was somewhat above the average height of women, her shoulders were square and high, and her neck short. The lower part of her face was heavily and resolutely built, and her mouth was large, but the upper lip was finely and sensitively moulded. Her nose was broad across the nostrils, and rather flattened throughout its entire length; her eyes were very far apart, and unevenly set in her head; they were as black as Erebus. Her hands and feet, however, were exquisitely and poetically formed; and her hair, which she wore short, was wavy and fine, and matched her eyes for colour. The movements of her features under the influence of thought and feeling were more eloquent than their form; and her gestures, and a way she had of suddenly leaning forward when she was talking and supporting her elbow on her knee—these and other unstudied things that she did, and which the absence of conventional beauty enabled her to do with impunity, imparted a force and character to her conversation which kept the attention of her interlocutor agreeably alert. Her voice was soft and clear and susceptible of delicate shades of emphasis, and her smile was intelligent and quick.

I was sometimes myself surprised at my knowledge of these and other details of the Countess Felicita's personal appearance and bearing, for my opportunities of observing her had not been very many, nor under what would ordinarily be considered especially favourable conditions. In other words, we had met only in the way that men and women are accustomed to meet in London society—in drawing-rooms, at afternoon and evening receptions, at dinners and music gatherings, in the box at the opera, at art exhibitions. A hundred other male acquaintances of hers had the same facilities of intercourse with her that I had, and might have overheard almost every word we uttered. But a familiar experience of social forms enables one to accommodate them pliantly to one's occasions instead of being any longer hampered by them; and not infrequently they seem to give a freedom and independence that might not be arrived at so easily in circumstances less ostensibly public. There is pleasure and profit in many kinds of outward restraint and etiquette; they give the mind liveliness, and

the precision arising from the necessity of immediately and economically accomplishing its purpose. I was aware that the Countess gave afternoon teas at her little house in Chelsea every other Friday during the season ; but I had never up to this time happened to attend one, partly from accident, partly, no doubt, because I was aware that my chances of talking with her would be less available in her own parlour than in any one else's. Nor had I ever called upon her alone (except upon the one occasion already mentioned, when I did not find her at home). I was a bachelor, and she a widow of several years' standing ; and it is well to give no opening to the forays of idle tongues, even when, as in our case, the persons most concerned might have afforded to disregard them.

At a juncture so exceptional as the present, however, the rules that apply to ordinary contingencies may, to a great extent, be safely transcended ; and I recognised without hesitation the fitness of the Countess Felicita's straightforward invitation. Hitherto we had met upon impersonal grounds ; but now a friend of both of us had, by his death, imposed upon us the need of a more confidential sort of communion. I wrote a reply to her note at once, and between seven and eight o'clock I presented myself at her door.

VII.

I FOUND the Countess Felicita dressed in a close-fitting black gown, with a white collar and cuffs, and round her neck a heavy antique gold chain and locket. Her dark complexion was more than usually pale, and as I entered her black eyes met mine rapidly and searchingly. The hand that she gave me was as cold as death.

'I am glad you answered my letter,' she said ; 'I was afraid you might not come. Ah ! you too look harassed.'

'The dead have it all their own way ; but they don't let us have ours,' was my reply.

'Yes ; they are free,' rejoined the Countess, glancing round the room and sighing. 'It is the murderer that suffers the real death.'

The news had evidently stirred her deeply, and the presence of one who had almost, as it were, heard Carlyon's dying groan affected her still more. During the first few minutes of our interview she scarcely maintained her usual self-control, and her eyes constantly followed all my movements and the changes of my face. I had never before seen her under the sway of strong emotional feeling, though I had doubtless been indirectly aware of her capacity for it ; and the spectacle softened and composed in some measure my own distress. For a time we spoke on indifferent

subjects, and only in the tones of our voices did our true pre-occupation appear. At length she asked me whether the police had made any discoveries.

'They are following out the clue I gave them,' answered I ; 'but thus far they have come upon nothing.'

'You were able to give them a clue?' she said eagerly, folding her hands and leaning forward.

'Not one that can be considered very satisfactory, though it has more weight with me than it probably has with them. A few days before his death occurred I saw a man leave the studio, and going up immediately afterwards I found Carlyon looking greatly disturbed.'

'Could you describe the man—identify him?'

'He did not come near enough for me to distinguish his features ; but his figure and general appearance I should know again.'

'Ah ! I am afraid that would not do,' said the Countess, unclasping her hands and leaning back. 'So many figures are alike—it is the face only that is distinctive. You could not swear to a figure. I do not say that the man you saw may not very likely have been the guilty one ; but, unless other testimony pointed to him, he will escape.'

'Yes ; you are right,' returned I, debating within myself whether I should speak of my dream. Did the Countess believe in dreams ?

'Is it true what the papers say—that he was on the point of leaving the country?' she presently asked.

'He told me that he was to start for Norway on Saturday night ; but he must have altered his plans, for the physicians who have examined the body say that death could not have taken place earlier than Sunday afternoon or evening.'

'Then, you did not expect to find him when you went there—on Monday, was it not ? But then, how did you get in ? Had the door been left open ?'

'He gave me his pass-key to use while he was away, and I went up on Monday to look at his collection of prints. But the murderer must have been aware that Carlyon was intending to be absent for a month or so, and have based his calculations upon the probability of the crime not being discovered for that length of time. If he had chosen any other moment, of course, Carlyon would have been missed at once ; but, as it was, the body was (as far as he could know) safer in the studio than it would have been at the bottom of the Thames.'

The Countess reflected silently for a few moments, taking her

chin in her hand and moving her foot on the floor at intervals. ‘Shall I say something to you?’ she asked in a low voice, her eyes directed downwards. ‘If you were not his friend, and if I had not been his friend, I would not say it. It is between you and me.’

‘You may say anything to me, Countess.’

‘I have been thinking about him,’ she went on in the same tone; ‘how he was strong both in light and in shade, vehement sometimes; one found him sad and gloomy without knowing why; life would seem hateful to him. And he believed that we had rights over our own selves—that there was no obligation except respect for the rights and freedom of others. Was it not so?’

‘It was very much so, no doubt. You knew him better than I supposed.’

‘Oh, he did not disguise himself; it was not difficult to know so much. But then I have been thinking, also, that he was not a man likely to make enemies—not deadly enemies. I cannot think that he would so injure any one as to make them feel like that. It is easier to think that he had fallen into some misfortune—perhaps something that he would consider a disgrace. The horror of thinking that the world might hear of it—’

‘I see what you mean, dear Countess,’ I said, glad to interrupt her in what I perceived was a painful explanation; ‘and you will be relieved to know that the circumstances under which the body was found make it impossible that death should have been caused by his own act. Two facts alone are enough to dispose of that theory.’

‘Ah! the newspapers had not said anything that . . . Yes, it is a relief. Tell me how you can know?’

‘In the first place, the drawer of the cabinet which I opened to get at the prints had in it a handkerchief soaked in blood, and not yet entirely dry; it must have been put there at the time of the murder. The cabinet is at least twenty paces from the chair in which the body was seated, and it is impossible that Carlyon should have been able to walk there and back after having cut his throat. The other circumstance is that the razor which I found lying on the table, although it was within reach of his hand, had been wiped dry—probably on the handkerchief, but evidently not by Carlyon. I presume that the murderer, after having done the act, lost his head for a few minutes; his first impulse was to remove the traces of blood from the razor, in order to conceal the fact that it had been used for the purpose. Then it suddenly occurred to him that it might be practicable to suggest suicide; and he left the razor on the table and hid the handkerchief away in the

drawer. He would have probably taken it with him if he had not been afraid of getting blood-stains on his clothes. It would have been more creditable to his presence of mind if he had left it on the table with the razor.'

I had intended to say more, but the Countess prevented me. She had risen from her seat, and was stretching out her arms, with averted palms, as if to keep back the vision which my too rudely-chosen words had summoned up. Her eyes were half-closed, and the eyelids quivered.

'Hush, hush! You do not know what you are doing!' she said under her breath. 'I cannot listen to those things—I have told you that I knew him! Oh! oh! I have seen murder,' she went on, suddenly pressing her hands over her eyes. 'Blood is a fearful thing to wash a handkerchief in! It dizzies the brain and quells the heart—and then they come and reason over it, and say how and why . . . Do not look at me! Do not listen to me!' She sank down on the couch, and turning away her face sobbed heavily for several minutes.

It was an outburst worthy of a tragic actress, but it was evidently not acting. I received from it an impression of the power and vividness of the woman's nature which, well as I had fancied I knew her, took me by surprise. In casting about for the probable cause of such an exhibition of feeling, I somewhat hastily ascribed it to a tenderer interest in Carlyon than she had given me cause to suspect. But before long she corrected my misapprehension. Raising herself from her recumbent position, she passed her hands through her hair, checked her uneven breathing, and looked at me with a smile.

'I will not ask you to pardon me,' she said, 'because, if you require my excuses, I shall be inexcusable to you. Your words brought back other times to me—terrible times. I have never spoken to you of my husband. He was a conspirator and a Pole—he met the fate of many who loved their country; and I saw his death—a bloody and violent death. One does not forget those things—they are as present to-day as ten years ago! It is a strange thing; on battlefields I have seen so much of death, and it all passes away; but that one little scene of a few minutes—never!'

'I can only say how grieved I am to have caused you pain; I have been so accustomed these last days to discuss the matter with the detectives that I have dulled my own sensitiveness to it. Carlyon was my dearest friend.'

'Is no one known who is likely to have had a motive to wish his death?'

'Only one person that I can think of; but that happens to

be one who might perhaps answer the description of the man I saw—who might have been an Italian, as well as of any other nationality.'

'An Italian?'

'The man I am thinking of was an Italian nobleman, of whom Carlyon has often spoken to me. A number of years ago Carlyon was very much in love with an Italian girl, who loved him—the story is too long to tell here, and would not interest you; but the gist of it is that the family did not favour him, and that when he attempted an elopement he was stopped and wounded by a body of men dressed like banditti, but led by one whom Carlyon recognised as this nobleman, who had also been a suitor for the girl's hand.'

'But if the rival was the conqueror, why should he wish to take Carlyon's life now?—if that is your meaning.'

'She was lost to him as well as to Carlyon; she entered a convent, I believe—at all events, she never married. That was enough to make an enemy of the Italian, who would look upon Carlyon as having blasted his hopes of love or fortune; and possibly there may have been circumstances occurring afterwards to embitter this enmity. I know that Carlyon has lately had anxieties and troubles which he would not explain.'

'All that is very ingenious,' said the Countess, after a little thought. 'Yes—yes—it is more than ingenious; it seems to me probable—most probable! You have never, of course, heard anything to lead you to suppose that this Italian might not be living?'

'No, nothing either way; but in the ordinary course of nature he would live for many years yet.'

'Yes; and the ordinary course of nature is not departed from so often as some people would try to have you believe. The more I think it over, my friend, the more sure I feel that you have hit upon the right solution. It cannot be difficult to follow out such a clue. This Italian can be traced; he must have been seen and known in London; the nature of his dealings with Carlyon will be discovered. Yes, I feel that it will be so! Perhaps, even, I may be able to give some assistance. On the Continent I knew many persons, Italians and others. Promise me that you will let me hear whatever news there is to tell, so that we may consult together.'

I was glad to promise this; for the intuitions of a woman like the Countess Felicita, guided and restrained as they would be by her masculine judgment and clear sense, were by no means aids to be despised. I took my leave of her soon afterwards, with the under-

standing that we were to see each other shortly again. It was not until I had regained my own house that I bethought myself of having omitted to question her concerning the nature of her past relations with Carlyon. But there would be opportunity enough to do that in the future. Meanwhile the Countess shared with poor Carlyon the privacy of my thoughts. She would have been a fit mate for him. She would have been a fit mate for any man ; and fortunate would the man have been who could have won her !

VIII.

SEVERAL weeks passed by, and the end of the London season was at hand. Carlyon's name had faded gradually out of the newspapers, and people had ceased to make conversation out of his tragedy. His murderer had not been found. The police had in one or two instances hunted out persons who had seen, or thought they had seen, somebody resembling the description that I had given of the mysterious Italian. One witness went so far as to affirm that he had noticed Carlyon and the other alighting from a cab in the neighbourhood of Vauxhall Bridge. This event had happened only a week or so previous to the murder, at about nine o'clock in the evening ; but the information was somewhat discredited by the addition that the two had a little child with them, who was very sleepy, and whom the taller of the two gentlemen (Carlyon) took up and carried in his arms. No child, sleepy or otherwise, had entered into the speculations of the police. Nevertheless, the incident was noted down, in order that even the most improbable contingencies might not be neglected. 'It often happens, sir,' remarked my particular crony among the detectives—a broad-faced, genial-looking gentleman by the name of Duffield—'It often happens that the most unlikely and flimsiest things are the very ones that tells which way the wind blows.' I assented to the general principle ; but it is evidently one liable to hopeless abuse.

During this period I had become a constant visitor at the house of the Countess Felicita. The new and intimate turn that had been given to our friendship by Carlyon's death had undergone no abatement ; on the contrary, it grew more controlling day by day. I felt myself strengthened and completed by her companionship ; and my own society was no longer so adequate to my needs as it had been at the time when Carlyon and I talked about it. She, on the other hand, seemed to lean more and more on me, and continually opened to me new treasures of her heart and mind. No word of love, however, had as yet been spoken between us. We had no lack of subjects of conversation ; and so long as

mystery still enshrouded Carlyon's affair, it seemed fitting that we should keep silence upon what lay yet nearer to our souls.

One surprise the Countess had had in store for me. Going there one afternoon, I found her with a child standing at her knees, absorbed in watching her manufacture of a paper cocked-hat. The child looked up, and I recognised my little friend Max of Kensington Gardens. The Countess probably noticed my astonished expression, and smiled.

'Max, do you remember me?' I enquired. 'How long have you been acquainted with this lady?'

'Yes, I remember you,' replied Max, in his childish French. 'You gave me the big apple; but Auntie would not let me go for the picture.'

'And who is Auntie?' I further demanded.

'I will explain the mystery,' interposed the Countess, laughing. 'I was the person who was responsible for Max's failure to keep his appointment. I gathered from what he said that Carlyon was the painter to whom you meant to take him, and I feared—foolishly, perhaps—that it might seem like an indirect approach on my part to send him there. Max is my nephew,' she added; 'but I am his father and mother as well, for they are dead.'

'This is a new page in the romance,' I said.

'It refers to an earlier page,' rejoined the Countess—'one which I have been intending to read to you. Max is associated with my relations with Carlyon. Max is the child of my brother-in-law, who died some years after my husband. The child was already motherless, and he had no one to come to but me. But I was at that time living near Paris, and Max was in Russian Poland—an infant among strangers. I had met Carlyon only a week or two before; he discovered, I hardly know how, how the case stood,—that Max could not get to me, nor I to him, for in that part of the world I should have been liable to arrest. Besides, I had not the money for so long a journey. Without saying anything to me, he set off the next day, travelled to Poland, found Max, and returned to me with him. And that was not all. Just before he left Paris, I received a draft for a large sum of money; there was nothing to tell from whom it came—except my own certainty that it came from him. I wrote to thank him, and to tell him that it should be repaid the moment I had the means to do so; but it was a long time before I got any answer, and then it seemed to me cold and evasive. He did not wish to be reminded of any obligation to him, and he declared that I owed him nothing. I have never been able to repay it, and now it is too late; but until

I had done so you will understand that I could not feel at ease to force myself into his presence.'

This story the Countess told rapidly, passing her hand occasionally over Max's hair, and glancing from him to me and back again. It put Carlyon's character in a somewhat new light; for though I had always known him to be kind-hearted, and ready to relieve distress, I had hardly supposed him likely so far to sacrifice his convenience and leisure as to make a sudden journey of many hundred miles to oblige a woman whom he had known so short a time. But I was glad, even at this late day, to be able to do him fuller justice; and besides, as I have already intimated, two weeks of the Countess Felicita were equivalent to a lifetime of most other women.

As London emptied, the Countess and I drew nearer and nearer together. She and I and Max often walked together in the parks, or made little excursions up and down the river to Richmond or to Gravesend. I did not purpose to leave town that summer; for I could find no holiday where the Countess was not. One warm August afternoon I ordered an open carriage, meaning to propose a drive to Hampstead Heath. On my way to her house a gentleman on the side-walk signalled to my coachman, who stopped, and the gentleman approached. It was my detective friend, Mr. Duffield, looking excessively genial.

'I fancy it will be all right now, sir,' he said. 'We have got hold of the right end of the string at last.'

'Do you mean that——'

'We have nailed the party,' said Mr. Duffield in a husky whisper. 'You will hear more about it to-morrow morning, if not to-night. I thought I'd tell you, sir, beforehand, in case you should tumble upon it too sudden. Pleasant drive to you, sir.'

The coachman drove on. As might be supposed, I was deeply impressed by this news, and my first impulse was to tell it to the Countess. But on second thoughts I decided otherwise. I had set my heart on having a day of quiet and unsullied enjoyment, and I was unwilling to spoil it by the introduction of a subject so painfully absorbing as this would be to us both. As I drove along, I thought I would avail myself of the soothing influence of a cigarette, but on examining my case it turned out to be empty. It was not quite empty either; for on shaking it out dropped the fragment of a half-smoked cigarette, the appearance of which showed it to be none of mine. For a moment I was puzzled to account for this; but the moment after I recognised the relic which I had taken out of the ash-tray on Carlyon's table. I examined it curiously. It was made of a peculiar paper, ribbed

transversely, and stamped at the middle with a monogram or other device in gold. This was partly burnt away, however, so as to be illegible. ‘But slighter things than that have hanged a man,’ I thought, as I returned the relic to my case. ‘I wonder whether my friend Duffield could have made any use of it !’

Alighting at the Countess’s door, I was informed that she had just gone out, but would be back in half an hour. I told the coachman to walk his horses in whatsoever direction he pleased for that length of time, and then to return hither ; and meanwhile, being indisposed to sit in the house alone, I strolled down to the Embankment. But it still wanted some minutes of the half-hour when I turned once more into the Countess’s street. Almost immediately I found myself looking with great earnestness at the back of a gentleman who was preceding me up the street at a distance of about eighty yards. He was dressed in a light summer suit, and on his head he wore a grey felt hat with a black ribbon. The attire I had not seen before, but every moment made me more certain that I had seen the man before ; his gait, and the peculiar carriage of his arms, were terribly unmistakable. He hastened along, holding his head down, and was now within a few rods of the Countess Felicita’s door.

A great clatter and rumbling, accompanied by cries, coming from close behind me, caused me instinctively to turn my head ; and I saw a carriage drawn by two frightened horses come headlong up the street. No coachman was on the box, but I perceived a person in a coachman’s blue coat and silver buttons running at full speed some distance in the rear. I stepped from the side walk, and succeeded in catching the bridle of one of the horses and stopping the progress of the carriage, which I then discovered to be my own. The coachman had left them standing at the door of a public-house, where they had taken fright and run away. The carriage had sustained some injuries, sufficient to render it unavailable for the projected drive ; so, after rating the coachman soundly, I sent him and the team back to the stables. But meanwhile the man in the summer suit had disappeared.

It was with very strange and bewildered feelings that I knocked for the second time at the Countess’s door. But again I resolved to say nothing to her that might mar the enjoyment I hoped to derive from her society this afternoon. Besides, if Mr. Duffield were justified in his prognostications, the man whom I had seen was either not the murderer, or he would be arrested within a few hours. Let the coming hour be a peaceful one, therefore.

The Countess had returned, and would be down in a few minutes. I waited for what seemed to me a much longer time, but

was probably about a quarter of an hour. Then she came in, evidently in unusually good spirits. Her dress was a dark crimson silk, made with a square opening at the throat, and with sleeves to the elbow. It became her marvellously well. She took my hand between both of hers.

'This is my birthday,' she said. 'They have not always been happy days of late, but I said to myself that this should be so, because you would be with me. Let us sit down on this sofa. Your hand is so hot! You haven't a fever, I hope? Let me feel your pulse; I am an old nurse, remember, and if you get ill I shall come in and do for you! But you mustn't be ill. You must be well and happy always. Ah, me!'

'That sigh was not a happy one.'

'No; but I am an ugly old woman, who realises sometimes that these delicious days cannot last for ever, nor even many weeks longer. Where will you be on my next birthday?'

'No farther from you than now, I hope.'

'I am going to Dresden in October to—never mind—to make my living. I have an offer of a settled income, which I must accept for Max's sake. There will be no birthdays there. Besides, I think this will be my last birthday. Last night I dreamt so.'

'Do you believe in dreams?'

'Very much in some dreams. Of course you do nothing so irrational?'

'I had a dream last July in which I have believed a good deal ever since.'

'Oh, tell me about it! Was it all a dream?'

'It may have been a vision—a prophetic one! But it is not a pleasant subject, and I had made up my mind not to talk of anything unpleasant to-day.'

'But an interesting thing cannot be unpleasant, and this is very interesting. A prophetic vision! You must tell me! If you will, I will give you something that I know you like. Prophetic of what?'

'It is really nothing that one can be merry about. Well, it was two days before Carlyon's death; I dreamt that I saw the whole scene—the man and all—up to just before the deed was done. Then I awoke.'

The Countess's face had turned very pale, and she relinquished my hand. 'The man and all, did you say?' she asked in a low tone. 'But you did not see it done? Then, what confirmation is it? How can you tell it was to have been a murder?'

'I knew the razor was in the man's pocket; and I saw his pur-

pose in his mind. It was the same man I had met the day before in the street. And I saw him tear up some letters, and pretend to ask forgiveness ; and on the Monday after I found scraps of letters on the floor, and "Amsterdam" written on one of them in Carlyon's handwriting. The coincidences were all very singular. However, nothing has come of it yet. Why did you make me tell it ? You are superstitious, and it has startled you.'

The Countess gazed at me fixedly for a long time—there was no expression that I could read upon her face. Finally she said in a guarded tone, 'Why have you not told me this in all the time since then ?'

'I'm sure I don't know. As you say, there's no confirmation in it. At most there is a coincidence. I hate the subject. Let us drop it.'

The Countess got up and walked about the room, her hands clasped behind her head. 'I am more used to dreams than you are,' she said at length, pausing before me. 'They mean something, but it is not all to be depended upon—in some parts it will be false. I do not believe all of your dream. . . . Yes; we will forget it for the present, and remember it is my birthday—my last birthday ! Living is hard work—I wonder I have kept it up so long.'

'Would nothing reconcile you to living longer ?'

She sat down again beside me. 'If the world could stand still—perhaps ! It does not take long for me to live a great deal sometimes. I would not exchange a day full of those long sweet moments for a hundred years without them.'

'You must have been loved very much in your life, Felicita.'

She glanced at me between the lids of her eyes. 'No, I have not been loved,' she said slowly. Then she went on with increasing rapidity. 'Why have you spoken that word ? It is the word that holds life and death ! No, I have never been loved ; my name is a mockery. I have been admired, and respected, and liked, and cared for—not loved ! Men have discovered that I had a mind—that amazed them so that they stopped ; if they had gone a little further they would have been amazed indeed, for they would have found a heart ! But a woman with a face like mine—her heart, if she is allowed to have one, must be friendly, or motherly, or sisterly—not passion, fire, love ! My ugliness has masked my heart ; and yet I have not the worst of it, for I have seen the beauty of an angel masking no heart at all—beauty that leads you on with lovely promises, and leaves you at last in a cold emptiness. The path to me is a rough one ; but the traveller who reaches me shall be warmed and fed ! No, I have not been loved ; but I have

loved once—and I have been hated! If he had disliked me merely, I would have killed myself; but as it was—as it was . . . Why do you look at me so? Have I frightened you?’

She broke off, laughing. But she had not frightened me; she had kindled in me a fervour stronger than the fervour of youth. She had fully revealed to me how great a woman she could be. The words were words, and any other woman might have learned to repeat them; but to say them as the Countess Felicita said them, with her gestures, her tones, her language of eye and body—to do that was in the power of no other woman beside Felicita herself. And with her dilatation, she made me great; so that although, when I had thought her less than I found her now, I had still deemed her more than my equal, yet this revelation of how far she surpassed my under-estimate of her, revealed to me also the truth that there was in me a height to match her highest.

I took her hand and kissed it.

‘You do not know what you have done,’ she said, withdrawing her hand after a moment and laying it against her face.

‘We both know,’ I answered gravely. ‘Let it go no further now. I did not mean to speak till to-morrow. To-day let us keep your birthday, and be like children.’

‘I am content; to-morrow may never come,’ she answered. ‘Yes, let us be children—and naughty children too! I promised to give you something just now.’

She took from her pocket a small box of white glazed paper; on the back was printed in gold letters the name ‘Felicita.’ She opened it, and it was filled with cigarettes, beautifully made, and exhaling a delicate aroma. She held the box towards me with a smile; I took a cigarette and lit it, and she did the same.

‘These are the best I ever smoked,’ remarked I.

‘There are no others like these,’ she rejoined. ‘They were made especially for me, and I never taste any other tobacco.’

‘I have often wondered that you never smoked. All Poles do.’

‘I am not a Pole. Have you never guessed my nationality?’

‘French, perhaps?—or Spanish? But you might be almost anything that was not English. What are you?’

‘I am a Roman.’

‘Roman? Italian?’

She nodded, wreathing the smoke through her nostrils. ‘There was no nobler or more ancient family than mine,’ she said. ‘I had a sister, who was not like me; she was the loveliest girl in Rome. A young Englishman came there and fell in love with her; and he honoured me by making me his confidant. Ah, me! How long ago it all seems.’

'Who was he ?'

'A handsome fellow ; no matter about his name—I have forgotten it.' I believe he was a painter. You can conceive that my family would not be anxious to marry their daughter to an English painter. I told him that ; but he believed he could do everything. It was a strange story. She loved him, too, with all the love she had.'

'What was the end of it ?'

'Oh, it came to an end somehow ! Let me talk ; I like to romance once in a while, and imagine what might have been. Suppose, for instance, that I myself had grown to love this young Englishman, who so coolly used me as his go-between, without ever stopping to think whether I were flesh and blood or not. That would have made quite a complication, would it not ? Then —let me see ! Then we must imagine a rival suitor for my sister's hand ; a rich countryman of hers, say, who had got the father and mother on his side. I, being jealous of my sister's Englishman, would naturally wish to separate them, and would scheme to play a double part between them and the rival suitor. . . . Truly, I think I have mistaken my vocation, and that instead of being a musician I should have been a novelist ! Do you wish to hear more ? You are not frightened ?'

'No ; go on !'

'Give me time to think—improvising is not so easy as listening. Well, then, I would pretend to assist them in some plan of theirs to get married secretly ; but I would take care that the suitor, with friends to help him, should be in wait. Then I innocently lead my two lovers into the trap—all because I loved the Englishman myself. You can imagine the rest for yourself, if you please.'

'Would you finally marry this Englishman ?'

'Marry him ? No ! not marry him—quite ! But I might go on loving him ; and some day he, having partly recovered from the loss of my sister, and believing all the time that I had been sincere in my co-operation to bring about their union—some day, perhaps, he would come to love me ; not much, but pretty well, as well as such men as he can love such women as I ; well enough to break my heart when at last I told him (as I would) that I had loved him from the first, and that it was my doing that the girl he set his soul on had died in a convent.'

'And the Italian suitor—what becomes of him ?'

'He is of no consequence—a mere stop-gap in the story. I should make him be killed in some duel or drunken brawl, like the empty-headed, petty-souled little fool he is.'

I wish I could describe the appearance of Felicita as she told this tale. She lay back on the cushion of the sofa, with one arm thrown over her head, while her other hand played with the gold chain round her neck. Her face had a carelessness, and at the same time a depth and intensity, of expression strange to behold; her eyes burned and at the same time laughed. Her courage and quality were like those of some empress of old Rome, from one of whom, perchance, her line boasted its descent.

A gnat settled on my forehead; Felicita took her handkerchief and brushed it away. I took the handkerchief from her and pressed it to my lips. It had a sweet but rather enervating perfume, which I recollect having smelt somewhere before. The handkerchief was of the most delicate cambric, with a monogram worked in one corner.

A silence fell between us. It was broken by the voice of little Max, who presently came careering into the room. He was mounted upon a stick, and wore upon his head a soft, wide-brimmed hat that was much too large for him. After riding up and down several times, curveting and prancing like a veritable cavalier, he abandoned his steed, and, climbing up behind the Countess on a chair, he took the hat from his own head and placed it on hers. It fitted her perfectly, and well became her short black hair and dark features, to which it imparted a somewhat masculine appearance. It was a grey felt hat, with a broad black ribbon round the crown.

Felicita, preoccupied at first, had hardly noticed the boy or what he was doing. But now, putting up her hand and feeling the hat, she snatched it off, and turned upon Max angrily.

'I have told you not to meddle with this,' she said to him. 'To-night you shall go to bed in the dark.'

Instead of taking this rebuke submissively, Max fell into a sudden rage. He struck fiercely at the Countess, and attempted to bite her hand. As he shrieked and struggled thus, his small visage scarlet with passion, I saw on his left temple a curious dark spot, a birthmark apparently; though, as I had never noticed it till now, it must have been one which only became visible under the influence of emotion. It was exactly in the shape of a Greek cross.

A sensation was coming over me as if I were walking in a dream. I looked at my cigarette. It was half smoked out, and was the facsimile of the one which I had found in the studio. But the monogram on it was untouched, and was of the same design as that which was worked into the handkerchief.

I rose and leaned against the table, facing the Countess.

'I know it all now, Felicita,' I said quietly. 'This child is

yours and Carlyon's. You came here to induce its father to legitimise it and rehabilitate you. To escape remark and identification you wore men's clothes when you visited him. You were dressed so when you made your final appeal to him that Sunday evening, when he rejected you; in order to put him off his guard, you destroyed those letters which he had written to you, and which compromised him. They were the weapon which you had threatened him with; but you could afford to throw that away, because the other weapon which you had resolved to use was safe in your pocket. You softened his heart, and cajoled him into his chair, and then you came behind and murdered him. Is not that all true ?'

'Yes; it was done so,' replied the Countess Felicita, whose gaze had not swerved from mine throughout this speech. 'Now, what shall you do ?'

'Nothing—except leave you.'

'I will not be left. To-day I meant that you should know what you have found out for yourself; but I meant to tell it all in my own way. Then I meant to ask you whether you would stay or go. If you stayed, you should be loved and served more tenderly than any man was ever loved and served. If you went—I kept this !'

She put her hand in her bosom, and took out something but she held it in such a way that I could not see what it was.

She stood up and extended her arms towards me. 'Which shall it be ?' she said.

There was a look in her face that pulled at my heart-strings till they snapped.

'If it had been any one but Carlyon !' I muttered at last. 'But I cannot be false to myself and to him too. I must go.'

'Go, then; you are not worthy of what I could have given you !' said Felicita. 'But it is I who leave you, not you me.' As she spoke, she lifted the object which she held in her hand to her mouth, and appeared to swallow it. She stepped backwards, and sank upon the sofa. Max, who had stood silent all this while, now ran to her and threw his arms round her neck. 'I am sorry I was naughty to you, and I love you,' he cried, kissing her.

Just then the door opened and my friend Mr. Duffield entered the room abruptly, with his hat on. But after a glance at the sofa he uncovered his head. His prisoner had escaped.

JULIAN HAWTHORNE.

Whitebait.

A FISH DINNER without the time-honoured whitebait would, in the eyes of most persons besides fastidious epicures, be considered as incomplete as Christmas fare without the turkey, or an Easter dinner without its joint of lamb. Hence ‘fried silkworms,’ as Theodore Hook in his jocular moments was in the habit of calling these little delicacies of our table, are always much in request at this season of the year; and their very name alone is sufficient to stamp the festive board, of whatever nature it may be, with an air of grandeur and dignified refinement. Thus at every fashionable restaurant—not to mention those countless nondescript coffee and refreshment taverns where the most tempting inducements are held out to persuade the passer-by to gratify the sense of taste—one of the chief attractions is the announcement that ‘whitebait is in season.’ In spite of the widespread popularity, however, of this dainty morsel of fare, much doubt exists as to the exact time when it came into request. According to some antiquaries, its popularity dates from the year 1780, when Richard Cannon, a fisherman of Blackwall, prominently brought before the public of that date the unrivalled merits of this savoury little fish, which has aptly been described as being ‘as silvery as a newly made shilling.’ Hence we are told ever since Cannon’s time this coveted dish has gradually, year by year, increased in esteem, until its fame nowadays ranks so high, that he would indeed be a courageous host who should condescend to entertain his friends at dinner without this indispensable accompaniment of fashion. Last year, therefore, was an important one with many of the fishing world, as commemorating the hundredth year of the eating of whitebait. Although, however, Richard Cannon may, in some respects, have been instrumental in introducing this fish as a special delicacy, and in expounding its many excellent qualities, yet it must be remembered that long before his time it was acknowledged as a capital item of fare. Thus, for instance, as early as the year 1612, in the general feast of the founder of the Charterhouse given in the hall of the Stationers’ Company on May 28th, we read of ‘six dishes of whitebait’ as forming one of the courses at this fashionable banquet. It has also been suggested that whitebait may have been served up at the dinner-table of Henry VIII. and Queen Elizabeth in their palace of Greenwich, especially as, off this part of the Thames and Blackwall opposite, it has from

time immemorial been caught in large quantities. There can be no doubt that from generation to generation this little fish has been eaten and relished at many a banquet, although in years gone by it may not have been known under its present appellation. Indeed, we find on record many an interesting account of dinners given by fellows of learned societies, Lord Mayors, and Aldermen, city companies, and rich private individuals, at which whitebait was considered the chief dish.

Again, it is still a matter of much dispute as to what the so-called whitebait really is, many contending that it is the young of the shad, others of the sprat. Mr. Yarrell, however, the eminent naturalist, has contended with great plausibility that both these theories are wrong; pointing out, as an argument in favour of his assertion, that the young of the shad is partly spotted. This, he argues, is not so with the whitebait, which never exhibits a spot at any age—its colour being a uniform silvery white. There is moreover, too, a specific distinction between the shad and whitebait, which consists in the number of small bones extending from the backbone. Thus Mr. Yarrell informs us that in the case of the shad the number of vertebræ or small bones, of whatever size the specimen may be, is invariably fifty-five, while in the whitebait it is always fifty-six. Even in a fish, he tells us, of two inches, their exact number may be distinctly made out with the assistance of a lens. A writer in the ‘*Daily News*’ of September 1st, 1880, speaking of whitebait, says:—‘It varies very much in size and quality, according to the season of the year. Thus, in February and March, considerable numbers of yearlings are caught. These are without doubt “yearling” herrings. In June and July the bait run very small, and “heads and eyes” appear in the nets. These are very minute, gelatinous little creatures, so transparent that the bright silvery eye is the most noticeable portion of them.’ According also to Professor Huxley the whitebait is not a distinct species of fish, but only the young of herrings. In a lecture recently delivered at the National Fishery Exhibition at Norwich (April 21st, 1881), he said as follows:—‘The well-known “whitebait” of the Thames consists, so far as I have seen, almost exclusively of herrings under six months old; and as the average size of whitebait increases from March and April onwards, until they become suspiciously like sprats in the late summer, it may be concluded that they are the progeny of herrings which spawned early in the year, in the neighbourhood of the estuary of the Thames, up which these dainty little fish have wandered.’ Passing on, however, from this much disputed question, we may note, in the next place, that the proper white-

bait season is considered by the principal Thames fishermen to commence when the Parliamentary session begins, and to conclude when it ends. As we have already said, in the course of the month of March whitebait generally make their appearance in the Thames, being then exceedingly small, apparently but only quite recently changed from the albuminous state of the young fry. During the ensuing months they are caught in immense numbers, not only being consumed by the constant succession of visitors who frequent the different taverns situated in the neighbourhood of Greenwich and Blackwall; but large supplies being every day despatched to the metropolis by railway or steamer, where they may be seen in almost every fishmonger's shop, and advertised on tavern *cartes* of all descriptions.

During the past forty or fifty years, too, whitebait-catching has become quite an important branch of British fishery, and, with the ever-growing popularity of this fish, is yearly, it would appear, increasing in value. Indeed, we are informed that one firm alone pays as much as a hundred pounds a week in wages during the season; and at another place the large sum of one thousand pounds is paid every year as wages to the whitebait-catchers. These figures are alone sufficient to show how many thousands of the poorer classes are more or less supported by what is looked upon as an article of luxury; and when it is therefore considered how highly beneficial the popularity of this fashionable delicacy is in promoting the livelihood of those whose means are next to nothing, we can only hope that its well-deserved popularity will continue, for years to come, to retain the honoured place of supremacy which it now holds.

As regards the origin of the term 'whitebait,' there is every reason for supposing that its name is due to its beautiful whiteness when first caught. Thus, in former years, these little fishes were used as 'bait' for the crab-pots, and were called 'whitebait' in contradistinction to the baits that were not white. Cuvier describes it under the title of 'harengale blanquette,' remarking that the little silver fish is of 'a most brilliant silvery white, and that its fins are in like manner of pure white.' Mr. Yarrell, also, speaks of the whitebait as 'clupea alba.' In Flanders, where whitebait are caught in the Scheldt, near the mouth of the Durme, they bear the French provincial name of 'Mange-tout,' a by no means inappropriate expression. A common Flemish name, too, is 'pin,' which is perhaps in allusion to the diminutiveness of their form. Referring to the particular mode of catching whitebait by which a constant supply is daily obtained for the enormous demand during the season, it would

seem that in years gone by this practice was considered highly injurious to the fry of fish in general; and hence the rule and order of the Lord Mayor was to the following effect:—‘No person shall take at any time of the year any sort of fish usually called whitebait, upon pain to forfeit and pay five pounds for every such offence; it appearing to this Court that, under pretence of taking whitebait, the small fry of various species of fish are thereby destroyed.’ At Gravesend, whitebait are frequently caught by the Thames fishermen in the small meshed nets used for taking shrimps—generally known as ‘trinker nets.’

At one time, whitebait seems to have been eaten by the lower orders, if we may rely on a statement of Mr. Pennant, who, alluding to this fish, tells us, ‘they are esteemed very delicious when fried with fine flour, and occasion during the season a vast resort of the lower order of epicures to the taverns contiguous to the places where they are taken.’ If, indeed, this statement be correct, a great change must have come over the class of epicures frequenting Greenwich and Blackwall since Pennant’s day; for nowadays it is not the poor, but rather the higher and richer classes, who can afford to sit down to a whitebait dinner. Thus, among those who honour, from time to time, a whitebait dinner with their presence may be found representatives of the highest and most exalted personages in the land, extending from the Court of St. James’s Palace at the fashionable West End to the Lord Mayor and Corporation in the East. For many years, too—although, from various circumstances, the rule has occasionally been broken through—it has been customary for her Majesty’s Ministers to bid adieu to their parliamentary labours by partaking at Greenwich of their ‘annual fish dinner,’ at which not the least in importance among the many sumptuous articles of fare is the ‘dish of whitebait,’ with its homely accompaniment of brown bread and butter, and refreshing cup of iced punch.

As regards the cooking of whitebait, one of the special conditions for its success, when prepared for the table, has been that they should be directly netted out of the river into the cook’s caldron. At the same time, however, there can be no doubt that the delicacy of this little fish rests as much upon its skilful cookery as upon its freshnesss. In days gone by the chief rendezvous for lovers of whitebait during the summer months was Lovegrove’s ‘bait-kitchens’ at Blackwall, where it was said to be cooked with the utmost skill. The manner in which it was dressed may be briefly summed up as thus:—The fish was generally cooked within an hour after being caught, and for this purpose it was kept in water, from whence it was taken by a skimmer as occasion re-

quired ; they were then thrown upon a layer of flour contained in a large napkin, in which they were thoroughly shaken until completely enveloped in flour ; they were next put into a colander, the superfluous flour being removed by sifting. As soon as this process was over, they were put into hot lard contained in a copper saucepan placed over a charcoal fire, and in about two minutes were removed by means of a tin skimmer, then thrown into a colander to drain, and immediately served up, being placed on a fish drainer in a dish. Of course the rapidity of the cooking was of the utmost importance, otherwise they lost their crispness. In Flanders the manner of cooking whitebait is quite primitive, though the only one, we are told, agreeable to the taste of the people. Of every little fish the tail is clipped off with scissors, boiling water is kept ready on the fire, and the whitebait is cast into it. At the first bubbling of the water, which happens in a minute or two, the fish are immediately strained, and dished up ; melted butter being the only sauce. Although the method of cooking them is extremely simple, they are nevertheless relished as one of the greatest delicacies, and, as such, are in constant demand.

Once more, the present paper would not be complete without a short notice of the Ministerial Fish Dinner, the origin of which is somewhat obscure. According to one account, in the early part of the last century, a very high tide in the Thames broke down a portion of the sea-wall that protected the marshes of Essex, near the village of Dagenham. An extensive tract of valuable land was, in consequence of this occurrence, flooded and lost ; and notwithstanding various costly attempts carried on for a succession of years, the breach remained in its deplorable condition. At last, however, in the year 1721, an engineer named Perry was successful in his endeavours to repair the wall—a feat which, it is reported, made as great a sensation at that time as the construction of the Thames Tunnel in after years. The work, however, was considered of such importance that an Act of Parliament was passed, appointing a body of commissioners for its superintendence. These when elected were mostly city gentlemen, and they soon arranged among themselves a dinner as a preliminary step for afterwards discussing their business. In a short time it was discovered that the inland lake of water, which it was found almost impossible to drain entirely off, produced excellent fresh-water fish. Hence, we are told, on the authority of a correspondent of ‘Notes and Queries,’ their visits came to be connected with a dinner of fresh fish, caught and served up in the board-room, which formed part of a building close to the floodgates, usually known as Breach

House, and which had been purposely erected for the accommodation of the superintendent of the works. This dinner soon became an annual institution, and many of the commissioners who had country houses in different parts of Essex contributed not only wines from their cellars, but fruit and flowers from their gardens for dessert. Distinguished guests, too, were invited, including the Cabinet Ministers, the latter being conveyed from Whitehall in the royal and admiralty barges. Hence, in course of time, it became a kind of ministerial whitebait dinner; and afterwards, owing to the long journey from Westminster, the scene was changed from Breach House and transferred to one of the taverns at Greenwich.

Another origin, however, has been assigned to this annual festivity, which is as curious as the preceding one. Many years ago, on the banks of Dagenham Reach, in Essex, a merchant named Preston, a baronet of Scotland, and some time M.P. for Dover, occupied a cottage, where he was in the habit of seeking quietude and relief from his parliamentary and mercantile anxieties; frequently entertaining as his guest the Right Honourable George Rose, Secretary of the Treasury. On one occasion Mr. Rose accidentally happened to intimate to his host that he was quite sure Mr. Pitt, of whose friendship both were proud, would much enjoy a visit to such a charming country nook, removed, as it was, from the bustle and turmoil of every-day life. The Premier was accordingly invited, and so much enjoyed his visit that he readily accepted an invitation for the following year. After being Sir Robert Preston's guest several times, it was finally decided that, as Dagenham Reach was a long distance from London, and the Premier's time was valuable, they should henceforth dine together near Westminster. Thus Greenwich was selected, and as this place was more central, other guests were invited to meet the Premier, who in time included most of the cabinet ministers. As, however, the dinner was now no longer of a private character, and embraced many visitors personally unacquainted with Sir Robert Preston, it was decided that he should be spared the expense; but, as a compromise, he insisted on supplying a buck and the champagne. The time for dining together was generally after Trinity Monday—a short time before the close of the session. On the death of Sir Robert Preston, the dinner assumed a political character, and the party was limited to the cabinet ministers.

T. F. THISELTON DYER.

Rambles round Harrow.

I.

HARROW, like Eton, stands in the middle of a charming country, and, like its fellow, it is always remembered with delight by those whose good fortune it may have been to have spent their earlier years within its precincts. The delightful reaches of the Thames, as they wind through scenes of surpassing beauty, may not be quite so accessible, though even these are not remote, and Runnimede and Marlow are within reach of a holiday's ramble. Harrow, also, cannot quite lay claim to the same antiquity as Eton. More than a century had elapsed since the gentle scholar who was so sadly out of his place as the Lord of Windsor had founded the latter, before the wealthy yeoman who founded Harrow conveyed his lands to the good foundation.

There is no monarch of whom fewer details are handed down to us than Henry VI., yet it has always seemed to me that if we knew more of him none would be more likely to command our sympathies. Altogether out of place and time among the turbulent insolent landholders who figured so terribly in the wars of the Roses, we have perhaps a juster estimate of him from the pages of Shakespeare than from any other source. He died, indeed, only some hundred years before Shakespeare was born. It is impossible not to feel strongly towards the man who left the horrible field of Towton, where two large armies, and those English ones, were slaughtered, that he might avoid the sight of carnage. Margaret his queen, and Clifford too, had chid him from the battle, ‘swearing both they prospered best when he was thence;’ but he sat upon a molehill, and thinks but too surely that ‘It were a happy life to live no better than a homely swain.’ He ‘carves out dials quaintly point by point’ in his imagination, and tells over again and again how he would spend his days, his weeks, and his years.

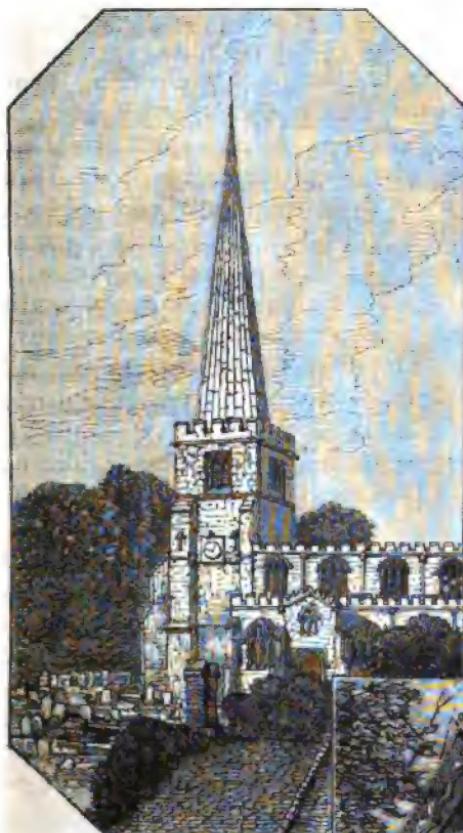
So minutes, hours, days, weeks, months, and years,
Passed over to the end they were created,
Would bring white hairs into a quiet grave.
Ah, what a life were this! how sweet! how lovely!

Often has it seemed in writing the articles on Eton that the quiet meadows and the shady banks of the Thames are just the scenes the unhappy king delighted in, and such as he would desire to devote to an academic life of leisure.

John Lyon, the founder of Harrow, was a very different man, and much more of the typical Englishman. A wealthy yeoman of the most exact business habits, he drew up a set of statutes that

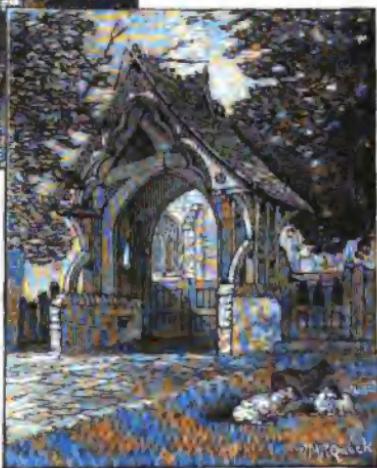
are principally in force now. This was in the year 1590, or two years before his death. He mentions his intention of founding the school, and gave the fullest instructions for the endowment and disposal of his property, and he indicated the very site for the house of the master and usher; but we shall have to refer to him again.

The church at Harrow, like others of its fellows, has been modernised, but we can see an excellent etching



Harrow Church.

ing of it in Lysons' 'Environs of London'; and in its old state, though indeed it bears the marks of the iconoclast, it must have been a much more interesting building. It was firm and sound, even though it bore the records of the Civil Wars: records, however, which were patched substantially, and which never failed in their measure to illustrate the history of the times. The chancel roof, according to Lysons' etching, seems



Lichgate, Harrow.

to have been on a level with the nave, and there are no battlements. The nave windows are, however, quite the same. Many are the curious records that Lysons gives of the monuments and the inscriptions both inside and outside the church. But the most interesting of these is the tomb of John Lyon, who founded the school. ‘Here lieth buried the bodye of John Lyon, late of Preston in this parish, yeoman, dec^d the 11th day of Oct., in the yeare of our Lord 1592, who hath founded a free grammar school in the parish, to have continuance for ever, and for maintenance thereof, and for the releyffe of the poore scholars in the universityes, repairinge of highwayes, and other good and charitable uses, hath made conveyance of lands of good value to a corporation granted for that purpose. Prayeis be to the Author of all goodness, who make us myndful to follow his good example.’ John Lyon is always alluded to as a yeoman, though he had a very fine landed estate, and one would have thought that old documents, which are very precise, would have spoken of him as gentleman, or esquire. If we try to trace the meaning of the word yeoman, we shall find obscurity in every direction. The origin is uncertain, and even the pronunciation is various; yūmman and yemman both have their authorities, though the long yōman is commonly received in England as correct. According to Worcester, a yeoman is ‘a freeholder under the rank of a gentleman; a commoner, a man of small estate in land; a farmer; an upper servant in a nobleman’s family,’ &c. Pulleyn says that the title of yeoman ‘was formerly one of more dignity than now belongs to it. It signified originally a *yewman*, so called from bearing the bow in battle.’ But this view would hardly seem to be confirmed by anything in Shakespeare. When Henry V. was before Harfleur, he encouraged his men according to their degree. To the leaders he said :

Now on, you noblest English,
Whose blood is fetched from fathers of war proof,
Fathers that, like so many Alexanders,
Have in these feats from morn till even fought,
And sheathed their swords for lack of argument.

This of course alludes to the men of high family, with whom it was the courtly belief, even as lately as Shakespeare’s time, that the most conspicuous valour rested. But if we read a few lines further on, we shall see that he seems to hold a yeoman much more cheaply. They might be men at arms, he appears to think, but very far indeed from valiant knights.

And you, good yeomen,
Whose limbs were made in England, show us here

The mettle of your pasture. Let us swear
 That you are worth your breeding, which I doubt not,
 For there is none of you so mean and base,
 That hath not noble lustre in your eyes.

This would seem to imply that valour might exist even in a man whose estate was slender. Mr. Lyon, however, certainly must have belonged to the yeomanry class who are alluded to in the well-known old distich :

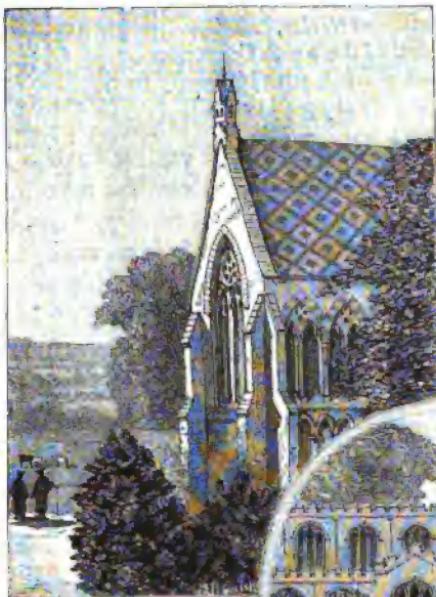
A knight of Calles,
 A gentleman of Wales,
 And a laird of the North Countree,
 A yeoman of Kent, with his yearly rent,
 Would buy them up all three.

Then again, in ‘King Lear,’ we find the fool saying to the king, ‘Prythee, nuncle, tell me, is a madman a gentleman or a yeoman?’ And when Lear says ‘a king, a king,’ the fool replies, ‘No, he’s a yeoman that has a gentleman for his son, for he’s a mad yeoman that sees his son a gentleman before him.’ The allusion of course is to his giving his kingdom to his daughters and being himself destitute. But there is much obscurity about the word, and it would seem to denote many degrees of condition according to the whim of the user. I should have little hesitation in supposing that the French ‘gamin’ is a parallel word, though indeed the class to whom it is applied in France differ very widely indeed from the worshipful founder of Harrow.

Whatever Mr. Lyon’s precise status may have been, however, his directions as to the disposal of his property are very precise. 10*l.* per annum, equal to about 100*l.* now in those parts, were to be paid ‘for thirty good and learned sermons preached in the church of Harrow; the schoolmaster or vicar, if thought a mete man by the governors, to have the preference.’ 20*l.* was to be given among the poor householders of the parish on Good Friday, at the rate of 6*s.* 8*d.* each. Then certain rents and profits were to be expended in the repair of roads from Edgware and Harrow to London, and between Preston and Deadman’s Hill. When Lysons wrote his work, now nearly a century ago, the rent of Lyon’s estates amounted to 669*l.*, but now they are, of course, vastly increased. This extraordinary man went so far in his directions as to state with great precision the hours of attendance at school, the number of forms, and the books and exercises for each, the vacations and play-days, and even the nature of the scholars’ amusements, and these are confined to driving a top, tossing a hand ball, running, and shooting. It was customary until the latter part of the eighteenth century for the scholars of Harrow to have on each 4th of August an exhibition

of their skill in archery, and a silver arrow was shot for. The founder was very particular in his directions about this, and required all parents and guardians to furnish the pupils they sent with proper materials for archery, and those to be of the best kind procurable. We can scarcely form an idea of the enthusiasm that prevailed on the subject of archery at that time. It was cricket and rifle-shooting, as it were, combined. We learn that in 1594 there were in Finsbury Field a hundred and sixty-four archers'

targets set up on pillars crowned with some fanciful device; and the Finsbury archers soon became famous all over the land. But the most humorous archery meets were at Mile End and Windsor, under the presidency of 'Prince Arthur' and the 'Duke of Shore-



Library.

ditch.' The latter title was conferred by Henry VIII. on a youth named Barlow, after an archery match at Windsor. He was the last to shoot, and Henry told him that

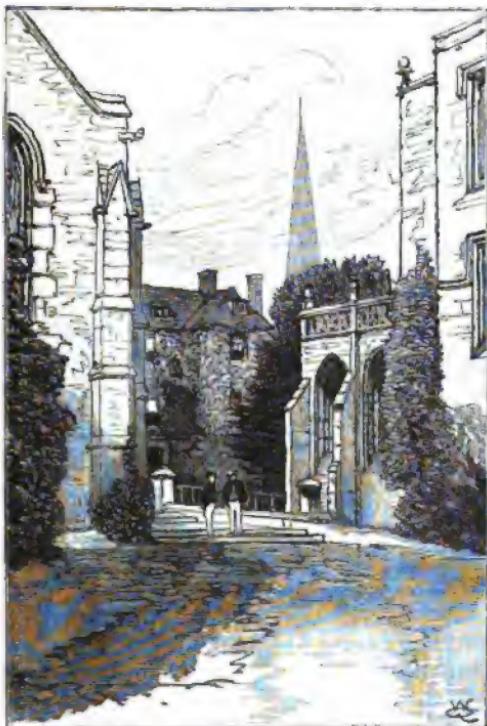
if he could only beat the archers who had gone before he would make him 'duke over all archers.' His shot was successful, and the king asked him where he lived, and learning that he came from Shoreditch, he at once named him 'Duke of Shoreditch.'

The library at Harrow, which is shown here, was built in 1863 as a memorial to the late head-master, the Rev. Dr. Vaughan. The building is opposite to the gates of the school, and between the



Chancel of Church.

church and the head-master's house, and is most convenient. The library itself is a very shapely and well-proportioned room, and the situation is very beautiful. Indeed, there was a fine chance for making a very effective exterior, but unhappily the coloured materials of which it is built have marred this, and an unpleasing effect is the result. There could hardly have been a finer opening for an artistic effect, and the proportions are not bad, but the chequered background of distant fields and trees and hills has been left out of the reckoning. The result is that there is nothing for the eye to rest on, and the beauty of the landscape is lost, or



Ivy House, Chapel and School, Harrow.

at any rate sadly marred. All this comes of designing in an office, and not on the spot. The task was very clear; all the landscape and effect was found, and a flat front to the road, built of light warm-coloured stone, would have given the necessary repose. In this, carefully designed windows, like those at Temple Balsall or old St. Chad's, Shrewsbury, or, indeed, a hundred more, might have been inserted; and then landscape and buildings would have assumed their proper proportions, and each would have been a delight.

The group called Ivy Cottage is a very pleasant one, and the buildings combine happily together; on the left is the chapel, built of flint and dressed with ashlar, and on the right is a part of the new schools, while the picturesque spire rises up in the background. There are many pleasant nooks and artistic incisive scenes like this in Harrow, and the hotel, which tradition says was once a considerable mansion, is exceedingly homely and pleasant; some more modern ones have appeared, but the King's Head still holds its own against new-comers.

The church at Harrow is often called the 'visible church,' and the name has almost passed into a synonym. The origin is this. Some learned doctors were disputing at Windsor about the necessity or otherwise of a visible church, and when Charles was appealed to upon some point in the argument, he pointed to Harrow church, which is singularly conspicuous from Windsor Castle grounds, and said that at any rate there was one there. It is out of bounds to attempt to enumerate the great men who, like Peel and Byron, were brought up at Harrow, but we must all remember the beautiful lines which Byron wrote when he revisited his early associations :

Again I behold where for hours I have pondered,
As reclining at eve on yon tombstone I lay,
Or round the steep brow of the churchyard I wandered,
To catch the last glimpse of the sun's pelting ray.

The view to which Byron alludes commands a charming panorama of the rich lands of the Thames, and shows in parts this river lost in plantations and fields, but again emerging and pursuing a circuitous course like a silver thread on a green velvet mantle, and on the east is London, with St. Paul's dome conspicuously outlined, on any clear morning. The towers of Windsor and the undulating Surrey hills complete the panorama on the south.

But we must leave Harrow now for the surroundings, in which it has been the writer's lot to spend many happy days, and we may take for a first ramble the Greenford road. A house on the Greenford highway is shown overleaf. It is a small country house by the road-side, and, introduced here on account of its chimney, which is very bold and fine, and would seem to be of considerable antiquity. A few words on chimneys may not seem quite out of place here. It is an error to suppose that chimneys were not used so far back as the Conquest, as some old histories of England seem to allege, for we have a few remains of them left, especially one at Winwall House, Norfolk, one of the oldest houses in England, and well engraved in Britton's 'Antiquities'; and there is one of equal antiquity at Conisborough Castle, in the Isle of Wight. Both of

these are copied in modern buildings, and the one on the Greenford road might make a good model for a rubble building. The well-known example of a raised stone hearth in the middle of a hall at Penshurst, Kent, is constantly cited; and, indeed, it is only a type, though a very excellent one, of many similar fire-places. The hall was spacious, and a fire could almost as easily be lit in it as in a field. Those who have ever camped out in Canada will know how well a log fire warms the surrounding parts; and if, when it has become a smouldering mass, the tent openings have been



Ancient House in Greenford Road.

arranged opposite to it, a large amount of warmth is distributed among the October or November occupants. One thing is a little singular, and at once it suggests an important consideration. When chimneys increased and multiplied, the number of fires greatly increased too, so that it would appear that a fire open in the middle of a room had fewer dangers than one in a chimney that might be connected with bearing-timbers. If an apology is necessary for these digressions, it must be in this, that these articles will be read

by many who have built or who will build houses for themselves, and the digression on chimneys has been the result of conversations with a friend during a summer's ramble. But one thing is certain—there must be something very wrong somewhere, and it may but too surely be that modern improvements have their share of the damage to answer for. It is a curious circumstance that since the national loss which the burning of Warwick Castle entailed, there have been no fewer than four great historical mansions destroyed by fire, and even at the early part of the present century they were as strong and as lasting as they were when John Lyon laid the foundation of Harrow. But a 'restoring architect' had drawn the proprietors into his toils, and hence the loss to the country. I think all these four mansions are subjects of Nash's 'Mansions of the Olden Time,' a book that stands quite by itself, just as Prout's pictures do.

The lanes are very pleasant here, and many are the sketches that an amateur artist would make. The small streamlets we shall see on our road are feeders of the Yedding brook, which at times is nearly dry, but contains many fine fish after a flood.

Greenford is said to owe its name to a ford over the River Brent which runs through the parish. It is situated about a mile to the north of the Uxbridge road, and contains some two thousand acres of land. The parish church is a very unpretending building, and consists of nave and chancel, and at the west end is a low wooden spire. Mr. Brittain, as we learn from the pages of Lysons, was a great benefactor to the church during the period of his rectorship, and collected old stained glass for the windows, and did many other things for the security of the small fabric. He also preserved a valuable brass of a priest which was in excellent order, and inlaid it on a marble tablet. The road to Greenford from Harrow is very pleasant, if we go through Roxeth and Northolt, and many are the fine shady trees and country-lane scenes we shall find to delight us. Yedding Green is a little off the road, but as it lies within an hour's walk of Harrow it is very well worth a visit, and is a good example of an old English hamlet.

The rectory and advowson of Greenford, which formerly belonged to Westminster Abbey, was granted by Henry VIII. to Sir Thomas Wroth, and was finally purchased by King's College, Cambridge, who still own it. It is of great value, and even in the reign of Charles I. it was computed at '160*l.* per annum.' In the Clergy List it is put down at 614*l.*, though this is below its actual value. The population is also recorded as being 573. Near Greenford is Hanwell, which also contains a church—a valuable

living. The Brent, which joins the Thames at Brentford, and gives the name to that place, passes through Hanwell, and empties itself into the Grand Junction Canal. Angling-books sometimes allude to this river as being an excellent place for sport, but in summer it is often nearly dry except at Finchley and Hendon and Kingsbury, where there are some deep holes that contain good fish. There is another way to Greenford, though a little longer, through 'West End,' and over the Paddington Canal.

Perivale, or Little Greenford as it has sometimes been called, is a curious instance of the way in which the English tongue has altered in its pronunciation. Norden says that it doubtless is a corruption of Pure Vale, in allusion to the healthiness of its climate and the fertility of its soil, but the ever-accurate Lysons finds that in all old records it is called Parva to distinguish it from the other Greenford, and Perivale is a gradual corruption. We learn much of the early condition of England from the description of this place in the Doomsday Survey. 'Ernulphus held three hides in Greenford of Geoffrey de Mandeville; the land was one carucate and a half, on which one plough was employed. Two villeins held half a hide, and there were two cottars and a slave; pannage for forty hogs. The land was worth twenty shillings, but produced only ten when granted to Geoffrey de Mandeville. In the Confessor's time it was worth forty shillings. This land had been held by two sokemen; one of them was a canon of St. Paul's, who had two hides, and might alien them at his pleasure. The other was Ausgar, a servant of a master of the horse, who could not make any grant without his master's leave.' A sokeman, also called a socman, is one who holds his lands by soccage, and this is a term of very wide signification, but in general it may be said to refer to some condition higher than vassalage. In Doomsday Book, which contains an accurate account of these lands, a perfect picture is given of England after the Conquest, and, indeed, probably no other country possesses so complete an account of the condition of society eight centuries ago. The boundaries are so well defined that they are final evidence even now in court. The four northern counties are not included in the Survey. The value of the estates was to be triply estimated; once as it was in the Confessor's time, and again as it stood when it was granted by the king to any of his followers, and finally, as it was when the laborious Survey was taken; and the record forcibly shows how invasion and spoliation ruin a country. It was found that twenty years after the Conquest the rental of England had been reduced by one-fourth, and startling as this may seem, it is even less remarkable than the value of lands and produce in those unsettled times. The figures given as the

rental of Greenford Parva are sufficient testimony on this head. Near Perivale is Ealing, which lies on the Uxbridge road, just six miles from London. Indeed, the western part of the metropolis almost extends as far as this suburb. To the south of the Great Western Railway is Ealing common. It stands high, and when the breeze is from the west, the Londoner may enjoy as pure fresh air as anywhere in the kingdom. The line from Paddington passes through Kensal Green Cemetery, where so many notables lie buried. On the other side of the Great Western Railway is Hangers Hill, where there is a tower that commands magnificent views of the surrounding country. Not far from the station is the viaduct which spans the Brent, and is called the 'Wharncliffe Viaduct,' in compliment to Lord Wharncliffe, who was the chairman of the House of Lords' committee on the Incorporation Act. The total length of this fine structure is 900 feet, but it is not so imposing as the one over the Dee, which exceeds 1,500 feet in length. The country about Hanwell is very pleasant, but some parts of the road back to Harrow are a little dreary, especially near the railway works that have been built. Of the celebrated Asylum at Hanwell it is not necessary to say much here, but even this abode has pleasant features that contrast strongly the cruel treatment that lunatics met with in old times. The Asylum is situated in the middle of large grounds and flower gardens, which are principally kept in order by the inmates, with, it need not be said, the best possible results.

The manor-house of Uxenden, in Harrow, was formerly in the possession of the Travers family, from whom it passed to Sir Nicholas Brembre, and from them to the Bellamys, and from them to the Pages of Wemby. Of the latter family Lysons, writing in 1795, makes the curious foot-note that they are almost the only family of Middlesex who have held landed property without exchange for two centuries and a half; nor, indeed, would the cause be far to seek, if we remember the ever-changing character of the metropolis. There still is a farm here where a very tragic incident is recorded to have occurred in the reign of Elizabeth. Every one knows more or less of the Babington plot to assassinate Queen Elizabeth, and place Mary Queen of Scots on the English throne. There can be no doubt that Mary was an accomplice, though some of her apologists try to throw doubt on this, but the evidences of her crime now stand out in the glare of day. She had implored Elizabeth to let her go and 'prepare her soul to die;' and when this was refused, she is said to have helped in various ways the shocking designs of Babington.

At Rheims there was an English Seminary distinguished for its intolerance and bigotry, and the celebrated bull which Pius V.

issued against Queen Elizabeth found great favour there. It is even said in an old history which I found in America at an auction during the civil war (the book came from some southern home) that the bull inciting the assassination of Elizabeth came directly, it was supposed, from the Holy Ghost. Ballard, a priest of Rheims, suggested the assassination of Elizabeth to Babington, a Derbyshire gentleman, who communicated the plot to some others, among whom was Chidioe Tichbourn, whose descendant was lost in the celebrated 'Bella,' and caused the memorable lawsuit. Babington, when the miserable scheme failed, stained his face with walnut dye, and wandered about from place to place till he found shelter in the farm-house near Harrow, and was executed with his associates under circumstances of great cruelty. Even his shelterer met with death in consequence of his harbouring him. It is only an hour's walk to leave Harrow by the old Swan Inn, turn to the left over the London and North-Western Railway bridge, and then, skirting Wembly Park, we arrive at once at this memorable place, and a walk past Woodcote and Kenton brings us back again. There are, however, several stile roads known to the initiated that would somewhat shorten the distance. If when we are at Kenton we turn to the right, we shall pass Kingsbury Green, and come to 'the Hyde,' on the St. Alban's road, just six miles from London; a walk of three miles to the south will take us to Kilburn station, whence a train in a few minutes will bring us back to Harrow. In this route we shall cross the Brent River, and pass by the 'Harp' that has figured in the pages of Dickens.

Formerly there was a priory called Benethy or Bentley situated at the extremity of Harrow parish, but very little is known of it. The buildings were about four miles from the school. Singularly enough, Dugdale says nothing about it in his 'Monasticon,' and the best account of it is to be found in Lysons' 'Middlesex.' It was founded by the Austin Friars, and in the absence of Dugdale's accurate assistance we can only conjecture, but that pretty safely, that it was handed over to the monks of St. Gregory at Canterbury, who were in fact more like almoners than monks, and were infirm old people, and presided over by regular canons of the order of St. Augustine—the first house of regular canons in the kingdom, as is very generally supposed, for in the archives we find that Cranmer the archbishop gave the priory lands to the king in exchange for others nearer home. Through many hands it passed to the Coghill family, and it was finally purchased by the Marquis of Abercorn in 1788, who proceeded at once to rebuild it on a magnificent scale; Lysons gives some very interesting accounts of the art treasures within its capacious walls, among them the bust of Marcus

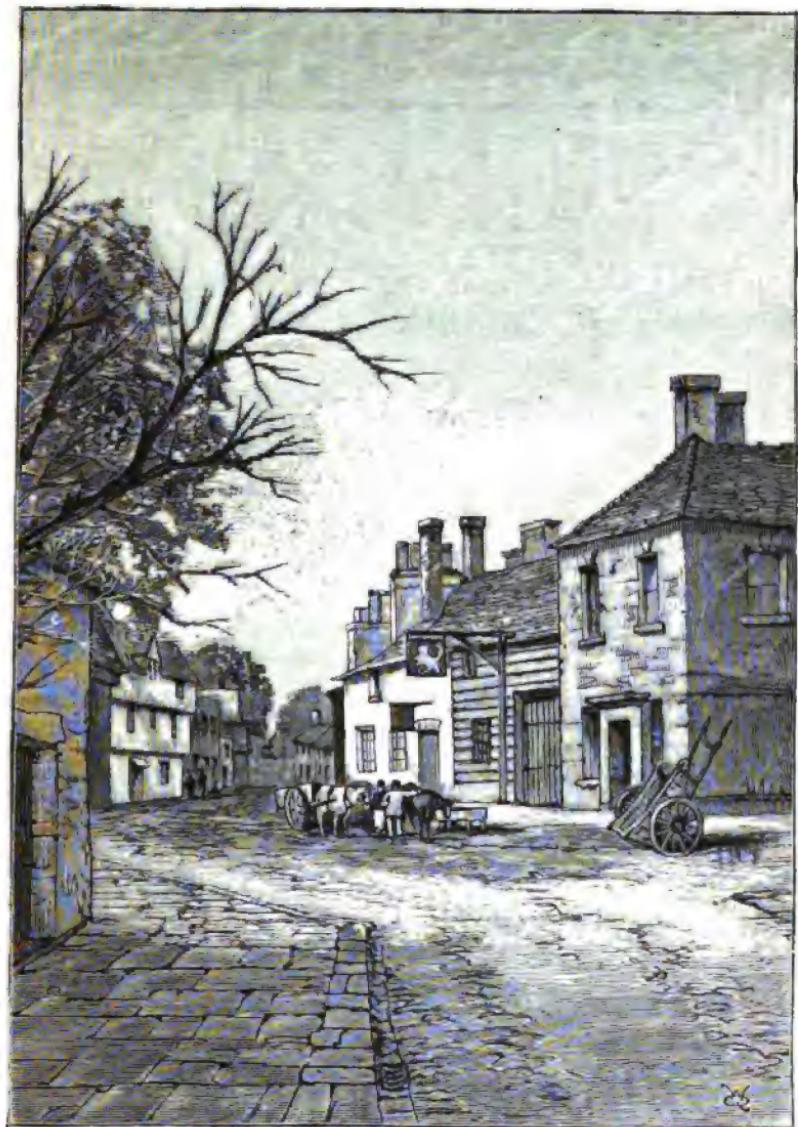
Aurelius, the calm philosophical emperor, whose lineaments represent in their clear majestic outlines a very high type of an English statesman, is here, and of course there is no want of Gainsboroughs, Reynolds, and Knellers. The house is charmingly situated on an eminence, in the middle of about 300 acres of pleasure-grounds, and the views from it are delightful. In the latter part of last century Bentley Priory was in the occupation of a Mr. Duberly, and in digging the foundations for a wall, a great number of Roman coins were discovered.

Mr. Lysons, in his ‘Middlesex,’ says :—‘Perhaps some of my readers may recollect having seen, in several periodical publications, a calculation of the middle chapter, verse, &c. of the Bible, with an account of the number of times that some of the most common words occur, with many other particulars, the whole having been said to be the labour of three years. When they are told that it was the amusement of a blind man’s leisure hours, they will be more apt to admire the wonderful powers of his memory than to blame him for mis-spending his time. These, however, are not the only calculations in which he has been employed. In the month of June 1790 he published an account of the solar eclipses for 1791 and 1793.’ He must indeed have been a very remarkable man, but I learnt from Mr. Lysons’ son, the late Canon of Gloucester, and a brother of the soldier whose name is so often before us, that this blind scholar was not free from some taint of suspicion. He used to calculate nativities and coming events, and was looked upon by the public as a very remarkable astrologer.

The village of Bushey, shown opposite, is another example of an old comfortable little country town ; and, rightly considered, we are very much indebted to railways for these remaining as they are. Had coaches still been the means of conveyance, not only the lust for modernising—which has almost destroyed the old churches of the land—would have been at work, but beyond this, the rapid transit of goods and passengers has made it more convenient to convert the great towns into central dépôts, and these form a much cheaper medium for the distribution of merchandise. Had the old means of conveyance still been in existence, with advancing requirements and an increasing population, it is more than probable that old-fashioned country towns would of necessity have been enlarged, and almost rebuilt. The quaint country inn, with its swinging sign, must have given way to a modern brick or stucco hotel ; and the country store, with its low rooms and gabled roofs, must of necessity have yielded to a warehouse of more or less pretensions, in order to store the necessary supplies for the surrounding habitations.

(To be continued.)

ALFRED RIMMER.
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Bushey Village.

A Heart's Problem.

BY CHARLES GIBBON.

CHAPTER I.

A POOR YOUNG MAN.

THE small hours of the night in early spring are apt to be chilly to those ill-clad ones who are obliged to tramp from the centre of London to some suburban retreat. So Maurice Esmond found it when he was making his way across Blackfriars Bridge southward. A keen east wind penetrated his closely buttoned coat, and he scarcely paused to glance at the long lines of golden shafts made by the reflection of the lamps in the river. Although he had an eye for picturesque effects, he was evidently in too great a hurry at present to study them. As he marched on, the number of passengers whom he encountered rapidly diminished, and by the time he reached Camberwell Green the streets were almost deserted. There were, however, a number of cabmen, a few young men who had been out on pleasure, and others who were out from necessity, gathered around a coffee-stall. A cheery-faced old man, wearing an indescribable skull-cap, stood behind the counter dispensing cups of coffee, the heat of which amply compensated for any deficiency of flavour; and for the hungry there were huge sandwiches and hunches of currant-cake.

The group was a merry one, and Esmond heard several loud bursts of laughter as he approached. It was a good-natured group too, and way was readily made for him as he advanced and asked for a cup of coffee. He drank it in silence, but was quietly observing his companions and listening all the time with some interest to their conversation, which was interspersed with anecdotes chiefly of a professional character, and as a rule much less coarse than might have been expected.

He laid down his cup and continued his way refreshed. Presently he turned into a narrow street which belonged to the older part of the parish. On either side were small shops—greengrocers, shoemakers, rag and bone merchants—and rising in their midst at short intervals the more commanding premises of the gin palace and the beer-house.

At the side door of one of the little shops he stopped, and opened

it quietly with a latch-key. The sign-board bore in large yellow letters the legend : ‘ Dan. O’Bryan, Tailor.’

Esmond was not surprised to observe that there was still a light in the back shop, for Mr. O’Bryan having, like most of his countrymen, a passion for polities, was frequently found at late hours seated on his tailor’s platform, stitching some garment busily, and at the same time arranging the affairs of the nation in long harangues addressed to his son, who was his only workman, or to his wife, or in the absence of both to the walls, which in his imagination represented spell-bound multitudes of listeners.

‘ Busy still, Mr. O’Bryan ? ’ said Esmond, as he looked in at the workshop door.

‘ Come in, come in, Mr. Esmond,’ cried the old man cheerily. ‘ I’m delighted to see you before I go to bed. Sit down and tell us what has been done in the House. I suppose you heard the debate ? ’

‘ I was not in the House at all to-night ; but I understand there was nothing particular done.’

‘ But something particular will have to be done, and that soon too ; for although I haven’t been in my country for many a year now—more’s the pity—I know that the boys mean to have their own way this time.’

‘ We will have our way,’ exclaimed the voice of the son, who had been sitting so quietly by the stove that Esmond had not at first observed him.

He was a very red-headed young man, with a good-natured face, on which he was continually endeavouring to display an expression of that melancholy which comes of too much brooding. In this he was not successful ; nature claimed him for a ‘ low comedy part ’ in life, although, like many eminent actors, he was thoroughly convinced that tragedy was his forte. Even his name was against him ; he had been christened Edward, but everyone except himself seemed to have forgotten that fact, and he was known only as Teddy, and sometimes as Teddy O’Bryan. He could not help feeling, in the midst of some of his dreams of the future, that there was something ludicrous in the picture of a leader of patriots being hailed as ‘ Teddy, me boy.’

Esmond was accustomed to the eloquence of father and son, and foresaw that they were fully primed for hours of discussion. He therefore made his escape as speedily as possible, and ascended to the little front parlour which served him as sitting-room and bedroom.

‘ He’s a queer boy that,’ said O’Bryan.

‘ I don’t like him,’ muttered Teddy gloomily.

'Not like him!' said the father, looking up; 'what ails you at him? He is as decent a boy as I ever came across; and when I said he was queer, I only meant that he bothers me by his being so quiet, and never saying a word about where he came from.'

Teddy spat on the goose to test its heat, then polished it vigorously, and began to iron the collar of a coat.

'I don't like him: and it's because he's so quiet. You'd think butter wouldn't melt in his mouth, but I'm certain he's got some wicked purpose under his sleek ways. How do we know but he's a—'

Teddy paused, as if the thought were too terrible to utter, but he looked—or rather, tried to look—full of direful forebodings. His father rewarded him first with a loud guffaw, and then:—

'A spy, you'd say! I am thinking, Teddy, you're grown a bigger fool than you were born. I'll go bail for him, and I dare any man to say that I'm not true to the Cause.'

'You might get yourself into trouble; for, as wise as you are, anybody can see that he is not one of us; anybody can see that he isn't used to being poor; and the mother knows that he isn't over-regular in paying his rent. She is as bad as yourself in regard to him, and says nothing.'

'But he always has paid some time, and handsome too; so now hold your tongue and finish that coat.'

Teddy proceeded with his work, mentally repeating, 'I don't like him.'

He had, however, a reason for his dislike which he had not yet explained to his parents; and that reason took the form of his foster sister Lucy. This girl had been Teddy's playmate and schoolmate, his companion as they advanced in years, and he had quite settled in his own mind that she was to be his companion through life. Never a doubt of the realisation of this plan had crossed his mind until Esmond had come to lodge in the first-floor front. He had only seen Lucy and the new lodger exchange a few commonplaces as they passed each other on the staircase or met on Sundays at the simple family dinner—well spiced with thorough-going Home Rule politics—which Esmond was invited to share; but the bosom of Teddy the Patriot was ablaze with jealousy.

There was certainly something a little mysterious in the ways of Mr. Esmond. The tailor's shop window had for some time contained, amongst its usual indications of the business being carried on within—buttons, patterns of cloth, coloured plates of the latest fashions, &c.—a card with the curt announcement, 'Furnished Apartments.' Esmond entered the shop, introduced himself to O'Bryan as having some connection with the press, and that fact

rendered references unnecessary to the tailor-politician. The next day Esmond was established in his room. His luggage consisted of a portmanteau and a box of books, the latter being disproportionately heavy in comparison with the weight of the former. As it was a cold day in the beginning of January, Mrs. O'Bryan had a blazing fire in the room, which combined with the smile on her round good-natured face to give him a hearty welcome. Esmond liked his landlady, and Mrs. O'Bryan's first announcement to her husband was to this effect :

'It's a fine young man he is, Dan ; as quiet as a mouse and as easy to deal with as a child.'

The kindly feelings which the good woman entertained for her lodger from the first day of his arrival soon made him feel perfectly at home ; and before the end of a month he seemed to have known Mr. and Mrs. O'Bryan for years rather than weeks. His life was a lonely one, and the Sunday afternoons spent with the tailor's family formed very agreeable episodes. Although Teddy had early taken a dislike to him—or thought he had done so—he only showed it by keeping a little apart from him, and only speaking when he had an opportunity to flatly contradict any assertion made by him.

In the fourth member of the family he soon became much interested, and their acquaintanceship promised to ripen into friendship. Lucy was a hard-working girl ; she was a dressmaker, and from Daddy—as she called O'Bryan—she had learned enough of tailoring to be of practical service to him whenever he was pressed by work. She was fond of reading, too, and this soon became known to Esmond.

There was a flush of pleasure on her face and such a bright look in her eyes when one day he placed a small parcel of new books on the table before her, that she appeared more beautiful in his eyes than she had ever done before. For the first time he became conscious of a degree of awkwardness in her presence, and that to a wise man, who did not want to fall in love, should have been a sufficiently apparent danger-signal.

'I thought you would like to see these, Miss Smith. I think there are one or two amongst them you will be pleased with.'

'I am sure I shall like them all,' she said gleefully, and beginning at once to examine the title-pages. 'Thank you, Mr. Esmond.'

He had never before thought that there was so much music in those two words 'thank you.'

'There'll be fine goings-on now,' exclaimed Mrs. O'Bryan ; 'ye'll have her sitting up all night reading them books, an' going

about like a ghost all day ; an' maybe sewing the wrong sleeves into somebody's gownd, as she did once when she got hould of something they called "Penny-Dennis." Ye'll spoil her entirely, Mr. Esmond.'

'I hope not,' he answered, laughing at the distortion of the title of one of the works of his favourite author.

From that time Lucy was well supplied with books, and they afforded ample subjects of conversation. Books are mediums, and even dull ones may serve as tokens of tender thought. Esmond was soon conscious that Lucy had obtained an influence over him stronger than any woman had yet exercised. He was at first startled by this discovery ; then, not having reached the noon of love in the white glare of which the eyes and senses are blind and callous to everything save its own transcending brightness, he called a halt. He had no business to fall in love in his present position ; hence he had no alternative but to leave the place. That was the plainest and shortest way out of the difficulty. He should go.

CHAPTER II.

CALLED BACK.

'Come in,' said Esmond, in answer to a knock at his door.

Lucy entered, with a letter in one hand and a book in the other, and he rose from the table. The day was a foggy one, and it seemed to be twilight in his little room.

'I have brought you these, sir, and I hope I have not kept the book too long.'

'You have not kept it long enough,' he said, smiling, as he took the letter. 'I intended you to keep that book altogether, knowing that it was a favourite of yours. Will you do so ?'

She seemed to hesitate ; and then, quietly :

'I shall be very pleased to have it, Mr. Esmond.' The answer was the natural one which a lady might have given to a friend in accepting any small gift.

'I am glad of that,' he said impulsively : and then checking himself, remembering his good resolutions, he began awkwardly to tap the fingers of his left hand with the letter which he had just received. 'I am glad because—because I shall probably be going away soon.'

'Going away ! we shall all be sorry to miss you.'

The phrase was commonplace enough, and there was no particular accent on any of the words, and yet there was a something in her tone and look which made him half regret his hasty announcement.

'I do not mean exactly that I am going to stay away: indeed, it is probable that I shall be back in a few weeks.'

'Oh, that is quite different,' she exclaimed, with a bright look, as if relieved.

Then he, with a laugh which did not conceal the earnestness underlying it :

'Would Mrs. O'Bryan be very sorry if I never came back ?'

'I am sure of it.'

'And my friend O'Bryan—and Teddy—and you ?'

'Yes, we should all be sorry,' was the response, with a little reserve this time, and a slight tinge of colour in her cheeks.

'And I should be sorry to go, for you have made me feel as if I were one of the family. I could not easily find such a comfortable home and such good friends. Sometimes I think I should like to stay here always. How would you like that ?'

'It would be very pleasant—we should all like it.' The latter part of the phrase qualified the warmth of the first.

That letter which Esmond had received was becoming somewhat crumpled by being continually bent and even twisted between his fingers.

'You would only find it pleasant in the same way as the others. Is that all ?'

She seemed a little confused by this question, and he made a blundering effort to relieve her.

'I mean that I should like you to say that you would miss our pleasant gossips about books.'

'I should indeed.'—She was interrupted by Mrs. O'Bryan calling from the foot of the staircase :

'Lucy, here's some one for that gownd.'

Esmond did not know whether to bless or curse the interruption when he saw Lucy go away, her cheeks crimson as if with the consciousness that she had been about to say more than she wished to say at that moment.

They were skating on very thin ice, and this conversation had made them both aware of it.

He stood looking at the door for an instant, as if he still saw her there. Then he turned to the window and looked out upon the fog, but the expression of dissatisfaction on his face was not caused by the weather. Presently he became conscious that he had not read the letter which Lucy had brought to him. Recognising the handwriting of the only friend who knew his address in Camberwell, he hastily opened the envelope.

Fig-tree Court, Temple, Thursday.

MY DEAR CALTHORPE,—The enclosed is, I suppose, from your governor, and I hasten to forward it. Hope he is going to make it up with you and set you on your feet again. Meanwhile, what has become of you, and when are you going to explain to me the meaning of this masquerading under another name? Look me up as soon as you can.

Very busy.

Yours,

H. ARKWOOD.

The letter which was enclosed in this abrupt missive was addressed to Maurice E. Calthorpe, Esq., at the chambers of his friend in the Temple. It was from his father, and Maurice laid it on the table unopened, but his hand trembled a little as he did so, for it had recalled many bitter memories. There had been a quarrel between the father and son, and, as in most quarrels, there had been serious faults on both sides. Maurice had been called to the bar, and whilst waiting for briefs, which came too much like angels' visits, he had been entirely dependent on his father. The allowance was not a large one, but Maurice was not extravagant in his habits, and he was able to maintain his position without any financial anxieties on his own account. He certainly did not inherit this frugal spirit from his father, who had been known in his early days as one of the most extravagant young men about town. The estate was soon mortgaged at heavy interest, and gradually those portions which were not entailed were sold.

Maurice, an only child, had been brought up in the expectation of inheriting a considerable income. One morning he was suddenly told by his father that there was pressing need for a large sum of money, and that it could only be raised by breaking the entail. To this proceeding the son positively refused to consent. Hence the quarrel and the separation.

Maurice forfeited his allowance, reduced his expenses to a minimum, and with a stout heart began the uphill struggle for fortune and position. Although he had not yet inspired many solicitors with sufficient faith in his forensic powers to induce them to overload him with briefs, he had gained some reputation as a writer on legal subjects. He had also contributed anonymously to the magazines miscellaneous sketches, essays, and verses, and to his pen he looked for the means to support himself whilst he waited for briefs; but he soon found that the productions which had provided an acceptable adjunct to his income proved a precarious mainstay. In spite of all his economy, debts accumulated; and he soon became aware that they would go on accumulating if he did not make some radical change in his mode of life. His debtors became importunate, and only refrained from extreme proceedings because they knew that he would ultimately be able to pay every-

thing with interest. He became morbid by too frequently brooding over his present circumstances, and comparing them with the position which he ought to have occupied had his father's affairs been managed with ordinary discretion. He did not complain of the change in his affairs, however, and he tried not to think unkindly of his father; but whilst he continued to move amongst the friends and acquaintances of his palmy days, he was constantly reminded of what might have been.

So one day he disappeared into the unknown regions of Camberwell, and there, assuming the name of Esmond (Thackeray's novel had always been one of his favourite books), he determined to work out his own way in life.

There had been no correspondence between him and his father since the day of his leaving Calthorpe, but he had learnt indirectly that the old gentleman was living a much more retired life than he had hitherto done. Maurice had been always expecting to be again pressed to break the entail, and he sometimes wavered in his determination to persist in his refusal when he thought of the old man's solitude and comparative privation. Now came this letter, and he hesitated to open it. At length he broke the seal. The letter was written on the old-fashioned quarto page; the penmanship was small and angular, with many flourishes; and the lines were as close together as if postage had still been a consideration.

Calthorpe, April 15.

MY DEAR MAURICE,—Although we parted in a somewhat unpleasant manner, I still hoped that as soon as you had had time to cool, your better judgment would see the necessity and reasonableness of complying with my request, and that you would see it to be your duty to give me some indication that you regretted the haste of your conduct. That there was some temper on my side, too, I should be the last person in the world to deny; but the positions are different. Apart from our close relationship (which in itself should entitle me to some consideration on your part), I am your senior in years and in experience of the world, and any petty ebullition of rage should be attributed to the natural impatience which any man of a finely-strung temperament would feel when so deliberately and obstinately opposed in the execution of what he believed to be his duty by the very person he most desired to benefit.

Therefore I waited, expecting such a letter as your own good sense and filial sentiments might dictate. I need not say that no such letter has reached me; and it would be superfluous to add that I have been grieved—very much grieved—by your silence. I hope still to receive from you some expression of regret. But let that pass.

Do not be afraid, my dear Maurice, that this is a prelude to the repetition of my request that you should assist me out of a difficulty. No; thank Heaven! On this occasion, as on former occasions when brought face to face with stern necessity, I have found strength to meet it single-handed and to overcome it. You will be gratified to learn that I have succeeded in arranging everything satisfactorily.

At this point there were several lines blotted out, and then in less distinct characters came the words, 'for the present.' The letter continued :—

It is on your account that I write, after waiting so long to hear from you. The feelings of a father have overcome me at length, and I am obliged to be the first to hold out the hand of friendship, although it would have pleased me much if you had been the first to do so. It would have shown me, for instance, that you regarded me as something more than a mere acquaintance, from whom you could separate yourself on account of a trifling misunderstanding. However, let that pass also.

The serious object of my letter is to induce you to come here at once. I have heard from several quarters that you have got into deep waters, and that you are neither happy nor comfortable. This is most unfortunate, my dear boy, and distresses me exceedingly. But I believe it is in my power to help you, if you are willing to help yourself by following my counsels. The matter will not wait, and I therefore beg of you not to lose a moment in communicating with me after you receive this. If you are in London, telegraph, and come by the first train you can catch. It is of vital importance that you should act promptly. I make no attempt to explain my project here, but wait anxiously for your arrival.

Now, let no foolish qualms or unnatural resentment stand in the way of your own good fortune and of the happiness of

Your ever affect^o father,

HENRY CALTHORPE.

Mr. Calthorpe apparently could not afford space or time to write the word 'affectionate' in full.

Although not quite blind to the bombastic strain in which his father indulged, Maurice was too much ashamed of himself for the hesitation he had felt in opening the letter to think of anything but the fact that it asked him to forget the past. It was true he ought to have been the first to seek the reconciliation. He had been obstinate, he had been selfish, and his father had been generous. Thus blaming himself, a flood of kindly memories rushed upon him, and he resolved to obey the summons without delay. His offence assumed an exaggerated aspect in these reflections, and it became more culpable in his eyes when he read this postscript, which had almost escaped him.

P.S.—Do not forget that years do not creep, but fly with me now, and in the course of nature you cannot have the opportunity of spending many with me. You know how I dislike such disagreeable thoughts, and so you can understand how keenly I feel our estrangement when I have permitted myself to refer to them in writing.

H. C.

Genuine feeling was expressed there, however superficial might be the letter itself. Maurice hastily wrote a telegram to the effect that he would be at Calthorpe that evening, and rang for some one to take it to the post-office,

It was Lucy who answered the bell, and at sight of her his eagerness to depart was suddenly checked, and the message which he was about to despatch assumed the form of a cloud rising between them. He had not yet owned, even to himself, that he loved her; but at this moment he was conscious that one of the chief elements in his joy at the approaching reconciliation with his father lay in the thought that he would be able under his own name openly to woo and win her. At the same time there flashed upon him the question, would his father ever consent to the union of the last representative of the ancient family of Calthorpe of Calthorpe with the adopted daughter of a tailor?

The cloud rising between them became more distinct and more impenetrable.

Lucy observed the flush upon his usually pale face; and although it was impossible to divine whether or not his expression was one of pleasure, she was glad to see him look so well.

Maurice impulsively threw aside that disturbing question which had arisen in his mind, and took her hand.

'Something has occurred which obliges me to leave here to-day; but it has made me happy, because it will enable me to return sooner than I expected. I should be anxious to return, if—'

He stopped. His movement and his speech had been so rapid, that Lucy had no time to think of how she should act or what she should say. The blood tingled in her cheeks, her pulse quickened, and something that was not pain seemed to rise in her throat, stifling any exclamation of her bewilderment.

The awkwardness which had compelled him to pause was due to the sudden consciousness that an abrupt confession of his love might distress her. What right had he to imagine that she had ever thought of him with any feelings save those of friendship? And yet the confidence with which she allowed her hand to rest in his, the wondering, half-frightened, half-pleased expression in her eyes, gave him hope. Still, he would not venture to tell her all his thought.

'I was going to say, "anxious to return if all goes well with me." Then I shall have a surprise for you.'

'A pleasant one, I hope,' she answered, smiling.

'I hope so too,' he said, with a certain emphasis in his tone, and pressing her hand. 'It will depend upon you whether the surprise is a pleasant one or not.'

'Upon me, Mr. Esmond?' she said quietly, as she withdrew her hand.

'Yes; but you must wait till I come back to learn why. Now, will you ask Teddy to take this telegram to the post-office?' *Digitized by Google*

He did not remember in his haste that any one looking at the telegraph form would learn his real name. He had simply doubled up the paper, with a shilling inside, and Lucy took it to Teddy, who, ready to obey her in anything, hastened to despatch the message. It so happened that the clerk was doubtful about the orthography of the name, and asked Teddy if it were Culthorpe or Calthorpe.

'It's not that at all, it's Esmond,' was the answer.

'There's no Esmond here,' said the clerk, handing him the paper.

Teddy was puzzled when he read the names ; but the suspicions which he entertained about the occupant of the first-floor front enabled him to solve the difficulty to his own satisfaction. The man was an informer, or something as bad, and Esmond was not his real name. He read the message several times, in order to impress it, as well as the address, on his memory, and gave it back to the clerk.

'It's all right, sir : just send it as it is.'

When Teddy got into the street he halted for a minute, as if doubtful about the direction in which he should turn. If he had just run a long race uphill he could not have been more out of breath than he was now, with his breast heaving, and what wits he had utterly confused, whilst there seemed to be a couple of large Catharine wheels before his eyes, scattering fiery sparks in all directions. All this was the effect of his momentous discovery. It was perfectly clear to him that his father, mother, and, bitterest of all, even Lucy, had been nursing a serpent which had crawled into their household in order to destroy them.

His first idea was to be off to the 'Boys,' tell them what he had discovered, and ask them to deal promptly with the enemy ; but how could he tell what might happen at home during his absence ? Maybe the minions of the tyrant government were already at the house, and its inmates being dragged in chains to a common gaol ! Teddy's imagination had been so fired by the oratorical horrors in which some of his countrymen delighted, that he rushed wildly to the rescue of his parents and Lucy. As he approached the house, a cab drove off from the door, and there were his father and mother standing in the doorway, quietly nodding and smiling, as if bidding a cheery good-bye to some one. Behind them in the shop he could see Lucy, and all his wild visions of the ruined home, of the chains, and the gaol, were dispelled.

'Hasn't there been anyone here ?' he gasped, glancing alternately at his father and at the cab rapidly driving away.

'Yes,' answered O'Bryan blithely, 'there's an order for two suits of mournin', wanted in a hurry, of course.'

'But I mean anybody in particular,' whispered Teddy, with a comical attempt to be tragic and mysterious. 'I mean anybody from the tyrants—anybody set on by that ruffian we've been havin' in the house.'

'What's the matter with the boy?' ejaculated Mrs. O'Bryan. 'Sure it can't be Mr. Esmond he's meanin'?''

Teddy's notion of expressing dignified contempt was to fold his arms, to lift his chin high, and to look downward, as if he were studying the proportions of his nose, whilst he protruded his lips and spoke slowly.

'Mother, ye don't understand these things, and so ye'd better leave them to us. There has been no Mr. Esmond here; anyway, that wasn't his name. He's been deceivin' ye all, and not any one of you would listen to me when I told you so; but I knew what I was sayin', and now I can prove it.'

All this dignity was, as usual, lost on O'Bryan, who only laughed at his son's grand airs.

'Then if Esmond isn't his name, what is it?'

'It's Maurice Calthorpe; and he's been writin' to another Calthorpe, and he's on his way to join him this minute.'

Lucy drew farther back into the shop when she heard this.

'It's ravin' again you are,' said O'Bryan, still laughing; but when he heard Teddy's story he muttered in a puzzled way, whilst he scratched his bald pate with his thimble, 'It's mighty queer.'

CHAPTER III.

FRIENDS AGAIN.

IN sunlight the little station of Dunthorpe looked very red and white, and so new that it appeared to be unfinished. Except on market days there was no bustle on the platform; only when a train was approaching were there any signs of active life about the place. Then a porter would calmly cross and recross the line with no apparent object; the station-master, with a slip of yellow paper in his hand, would take a placid survey of the rails; the booking-clerk would leisurely open his wicket and (sometimes) issue half-a-dozen tickets. On a dark wet evening the station was dismal enough to make inward- and outward-bound passengers eager to get away from it. Heavy drops of rain falling from the eaves of the roofs plashed into tiny pools which reflected the feeble lights of the lamps. Then a cold wind sweeping up the hollow completed the discomforts of the station,

So when Maurice jumped from the train he was pleased to find his father's man waiting for him with a pony phaeton.

'Glad to see you back, sir,' was the man's cheery salutation.

'Thank you, Harris. How is my father?'

'Bright, sir, bright as ever; and younger nor ever.'

Dismal as the evening was, Maurice experienced a sense of exhilaration as he was driving along the familiar road towards his home. The hedge-rows were like thick black walls, and clumps of trees formed opaque masses, showing curious outlines against the dull grey sky. He could distinguish the wayside cottages and farmsteads, which seemed like old friends repeating to him Harris's cheery welcome; and the gurgle of the river as they crossed the narrow bridge recalled pleasant memories of fishing and shooting exploits.

His buoyancy of spirit, however, gradually gave place to a sense of depression as he drew near the house, and in his mind's eye saw his father at last broken down and so lonely that he called upon his refractory son to come and comfort him in his declining days. He could not help thinking of him thus, in spite of the assurance Harris had given him, for he knew that his father was too proud to display any weakness to others.

This mood changed to wonder when, as the phaeton emerged from the dark avenue, Maurice felt his eyes dazzled by a blaze of light from the windows of Calthorpe House. The face of the building presented three gables, with a graceful drapery of ivy, through which in summer peeped white and yellow roses; and, surrounded by dense shrubberies and huge trees, it had a comfortable, old-fashioned, settled expression. At present it seemed to be laughing at the bleakness of the night, and hugging itself with the consciousness of a cosy interior.

'Has my father friends with him to-night?' inquired Maurice.

'Didn't you know, sir? I thought that was why you came home. A heap of company, sir; been making ready for them this fortnight or more. Some great soldier come back from the wars, and master is giving him a grand welcome.'

'Indeed! What is the gentleman's name?'

'Colonel Cuthbert—one of the Cuthberts of Hollyford; and they do say a stunnin' soldier that has won ever so many battles.'

Maurice was astounded by what he heard, and became puzzled almost to the degree of bewilderment by what he saw when he entered the house. There was nothing to suggest that it was the residence of an impoverished gentleman. There were brightness, warmth, and an atmosphere of ease everywhere. The room, for-

merly his own, had been prepared for him, and a glad fire made the faded hangings of window and bedstead look as if they had renewed their youth.

The contrast between all this and the sad home which he had expected to enter caused Maurice to question whether or not he was dreaming.

'Mr. Calthorpe is dressing, sir,' said a servant, 'and bade me say that he would be glad to see you for a few minutes in his room.'

Maurice at once proceeded to his father's dressing-room, pleased to think that he would presently have a satisfactory explanation of the enigma which perplexed him.

Mr. Henry Calthorpe was nearly seventy, tall, slender, and agile; face clean-shaven, head encircled by a wreath of white curls, hands delicate, and yet suggestive of some nervous force. He held both hands out to his son, and received him with an air of paternal friendliness and dignity.

Maurice had come to comfort and forgive: he felt as if he were being graciously pardoned and welcomed by a tender-hearted parent as a penitent prodigal.

'You have just come in time, Maurice,' said the father, with a pleasant smile on his sallow and almost wrinkleless face. 'I am sorry you did not receive my letter sooner, so that you might have come prepared for this evening. Colonel Cuthbert is an excellent fellow, and I particularly wish you to show him attention. He is to be our neighbour, you know—or perhaps I ought to say *your* neighbour, remembering how old I am.'

There was such a droll mixture of self-complacency with an under-current of feeling that the present was an occasion on which some sentiment should be shown, that Maurice began to see the comic side of the position. And so:

'You seem well enough, sir, to be able to say "our neighbour." Time has dealt kindly with you, and I hope it will continue to do so for many years. Certainly your letter did not lead me to expect to find you—'

'To find me so well,' interrupted Mr. Calthorpe, with a graceful movement of the hand, as if deprecating any further reference to his letter. 'You are not sorry, I hope, to discover that I can still enjoy myself in the old way.'

'On the contrary, I am delighted.'

'Glad to hear it; but it is only once in a while now, and the intervals between my enjoyments are long. There! we must have no unpleasant thoughts to-night, and none to-morrow either, if we can help it. Forget and forgive—that is to be our motto. Now go and get yourself ready, and remember it is important—

most important for your own sake—that you should make a good impression upon everybody.'

'But I do not quite understand.'

'There is no time to explain at present. You shall learn everything as soon as our friends have gone. I promise you some surprise, and a good deal of pleasure, I hope. Now go, and join me in the drawing-room as quickly as you can.'

Although this brief interview had not given Maurice much information, he was relieved of the feeling of awkwardness with which he had looked forward to it, and was satisfied that by some means his father had got affairs into order again for a time at least. He was, therefore, in the mood to enjoy himself; and as the guests were with few exceptions old acquaintances, glad to see him, he was soon almost as happy in their midst as if there had been no dreary interval of banishment between this and their last meeting. His father had always been notable as an excellent host, combining the tact of a woman in assorting the company with the genius of a diplomatist for making each guest display himself or herself to the best advantage. In his palmiest days he had never succeeded more thoroughly in entertaining his friends.

In the drawing-room and in the dining-room Maurice's wonder grew: since writing that letter which had brought him home, his father must have found Aladdin's lamp, he thought; and by-and-by he came to regard the guest of the evening, Colonel Cuthbert, as being intimately associated with the marvels he beheld.

The Colonel was a quiet-looking gentleman of average height and wiry frame. A large head, strongly marked, sun-tanned features, dark eyes, and bushy iron-grey hair, whiskers, and moustache, were the chief characteristics of the outer man. His thin straight lips were indicative of firmness, and his whole appearance was that of one who speaks little and does much. Although somewhat reserved in manner with new acquaintances, he was always courteous, and those who were admitted to his friendship soon discovered that his nature was singularly gentle and simple.

Long ago he had left his home, 'under a cloud,' the gossips said. There was a woman in the case, of course, and hints of painful events and family disagreements. The story had been almost forgotten, but his reappearance in the neighbourhood of the scenes of his youth refreshed the memories of the gossips, and absurd versions of the cause of his long absence were speedily in circulation. The delicate veil of mystery which hung over his past rendered him an object of interest to the more sympathetic sex, and of some curiosity to the men.

Despite the difference of their years, Maurice and he imme-

diateley became friends. They talked much together during the evening; and before the Colonel took his leave it was arranged that Maurice should visit him on the following day at Hollyford.

When good-bye had been said to the last guest, Mr. Calthorpe took his son's arm and drew a long breath of relief, although his face was radiant with satisfaction.

'Thank Heaven that's over! Come along with me to the library, where we can lay aside our company manners and you can smoke. . . . You found Cuthbert agreeable, I hope?' he continued, as they crossed the hall.

'I do not remember ever having met anybody with whom I became so intimate in such a short time.'

'That is excellent; and you will like him better the more you know him. He is a capital fellow.'

This enthusiastic admiration of another man presented a phase of his father's character which Maurice could not remember ever having observed before. He had known him go into rhapsodies about a horse, but never about a man.

'He has certainly interested me very much. I didn't know that you were old friends,' said Maurice, lighting his cigar.

'Oh, yes, I knew him very well in my salad days,' replied Mr. Calthorpe, as he seated himself in an easy-chair by the hearth. 'He was not so quiet then as he is now; he had a lot of "go" in him, as you would say, and we all thought he would do something remarkable.'

'And so he has, I understand.'

'True, but he would have done a great deal more if he had not made a fool of himself to begin with. However, that's his affair, and our own affairs are what we have to talk about to-night.'

'I confess that I am more interested in that subject, sir, than in Colonel Cuthbert. When I was coming here I was afraid that —'

'That you would find me in a worse plight than when we parted. I dare say you think my lugubrious letter was all humbug — come, be quite frank with me.'

'I should not be frank with you,' began Maurice, after a brief struggle to find words which should convey his meaning with the least chance of being misinterpreted, 'if I did not confess that I began to think you had written to me when you were in a depressed state of mind.'

The father, with half-closed eyelids, scanned the pale, honest face of his son; then, coolly:

'Well, I suppose that was natural; I had an attack of gout at the time, and as one gets on in years that sort of thing does affect

the humour in which we speak or write. Probably our best course will be for both of us to thank the gout, since it has brought us together.'

'I am glad to be here,' was all Maurice said.

'Then, in the first place, let me try to put you at ease on one important subject. I have not the remotest design upon the entail.'

'I was not thinking of that,' was the hasty remark.

'Very likely not, but you would come to think of it soon if you were not assured that you might dismiss it from your mind. I wished you to be here'—the old man paused: there was no expression on his smooth face, no faltering in the tone of his voice, but there was a slight quiver of the eyelids and a shortness of breathing which suggested that there was passing through his mind some deeper emotion than he cared to manifest. Then, deliberately: 'I wished you to be here, first, for your own sake; next, because I wished to see you fairly established in the world, and because I saw my way to help you effectively.'

'As you have put aside the one subject on which we might disagree, I shall be glad, sir, to follow your counsel as far as it is in my power to do so.'

'That is as much as to say, provided that everything which I have to suggest is agreeable to you, I may expect obedience,' said Mr. Calthorpe. 'I should have thought that you would have shown something a little more like satisfaction in learning that I was able to help you than that implies. Stop!—you need not express any gratitude just now; there will be time enough for that by-and-by. I understand that you have not been very successful in your profession, so far?'

'If you were to say that I have not had any success at all, you would be correct,' answered Maurice, shrugging his shoulders.

'Ah, well, it takes a long time to make way at the bar; and you know that I never thought you had the necessary qualifications for the profession.'

'Yes; but when I decided upon entering it, I thought only of chamber-practice.'

'It was like you to choose the branch which is slowest of all in growth. And pray, what sort of an income do you make by this newspaper writing in which Arkwood tells me you are engaged?'

'I manage to keep body and soul together, that is all—at present.'

'And in the future?'

At that question the man's eyes brightened for a moment, for

he liked his work, and had had dreams of what he might do in literature; but he knew that his father was thinking entirely of the practical side of the question, and wished to know the value of his dreams in cash.

'The future would depend upon whether or not I had the special gifts necessary to distinguish myself as a journalist. In the mean while, however, it enables me to wait until I shall have found favour in the eyes of attorneys, and I am content.'

'Ah, my plan is a much better one than yours. You will no doubt think it is a commonplace one, but, at any rate, it is practicable, and will not only enable you to wait for clients, but to attract them. There is an *if* in it, however—*if* is very potent in everything we attempt.'

'I do not think the *if* can be insurmountable, since you say the plan is practicable.'

'Yes, it is quite so, but only *if* it does not interfere with any previous engagement you may have made.'

Mr. Calthorpe pronounced these words so slowly, and kept his eyes fixed so steadily on his son, that the latter felt his cheeks grow hot, and the image of Lucy was flitting before his eyes.

'You mean to suggest marriage,' he said brusquely.

'Exactly. It is the simplest way of overcoming the obstacles to your advancement. Do you dislike the project, or is there anything to render it impossible for you to enter upon it?'

'There is certainly nothing to render it impossible; but I have ——'

'Not got engaged, I hope?'

'No, but there is some one I like too well to care about marrying anyone else.'

'Is she rich?'

'Very poor; but rich enough ——'

'Yes, yes, I understand all that; but you said that you were not engaged?'

'I have not even told her of what I have been thinking.'

Mr. Calthorpe drew a long breath of relief, and smiled complacently.

'Then there is no difficulty whatever on that score; and as I am going to give you credit for some common sense, we can proceed to business. This is our position: all the mortgages on the property are now in the hands of one gentleman; he has increased the amount originally advanced to me on condition that, if I do not redeem the property at the end of three years, I shall surrender it to him entirely, on the payment of a further sum agreed upon. You see, the bargain is a very fair one. The money I have now in

hand will enable us to live for three years comfortably in the position which becomes the Calthorpes of Calthorpe. Within that period I expect you to marry a lady whose fortune will enable you to hold the estates unburdened.'

During this calm statement of the case Maurice was thinking of Lucy. He was perfectly aware of the advantages which his father was offering to him; and his relations with Lucy were still of such a nature that there was no probability of her suffering extreme misery if she should never see him again. But the very thought that she could lose him and not suffer stirred some spring of human perversity, and for the moment he felt as if his life depended upon her. So there was a note of bitterness in his tone as he answered :

' I am afraid I do not think your plan quite so practicable as you do. But perhaps you have completed the scheme, and have found a lady who possesses the requisite wealth, and is willing to accept such a husband as I should be under the circumstances ? '

' I have thought of the lady, and believe that you may win her; but you shall see that I am not going to wound either your self-respect or the respect which you ought to entertain for her. I do not mean to tell you who she is.'

' Not tell me who she is? Then, how am I to know that when I am making my lover-suit to order I am not blundering all the time ? '

Mr. Calthorpe tapped the points of the fingers of each hand together, smiling as if amused by his son's humour, and inwardly chuckling at his own adroitness.

' I shall do my best to prevent the blunder; but if you make it, I shall not attempt to interfere. I only ask that you will give up this passing fancy of yours for this lady who is unknown to me; that you will take your place here, enjoying the society of my friends, maintaining your position as the heir of Calthorpe, and spending what time you please in the pursuit of your profession. With the one exception mentioned, I make no condition regarding your conduct. According to my view of it, the arrangement is a very good one for you.'

Maurice threw away the end of his cigar, and made a hasty movement towards the door; but checking the impulse which the remembrance of Lucy inspired to leave the room in silence, he returned to the hearth.

' I do not know how to answer you. I wish to be frank, and I know that if I were to speak as I feel at this moment you would call me a fool. Enough for the present, then, that I fully appreciate your kindness, and have no desire to pretend to undervalue the

benefits which you offer me ; but this passing fancy, as you call it, has a stronger hold upon me than even I understood until you explained your wishes to me.'

Mr. Calthorpe rose, and quietly rested his hand on his son's shoulder. There was a serious expression on his face, and he looked much older than he had done during the whole of the evening.

' My dear Maurice,' he said earnestly, ' most people think there is some good nature in me. You sometimes give me the impression that you think me too cynical and too selfish to be capable of understanding the emotions which are stirring in you just now. That is a mistake : I can understand them, and I like you all the better for them. I do not ask you to give me any answer either now or in the future ; I make no condition whatever ; I only ask you—to be my son.'

Maurice was for a moment bewildered : it was impossible to doubt the sincerity of his father's craving for sympathy ; and grasping the delicate hands spasmodically in his own, he said huskily :

' I shall do what I can to please you, father.'

He had not called him ' father ' for a long time now ; and in that moment the two men were drawn more closely together than they had ever been before.

(*To be continued.*)

B E L G R A V I A.

AUGUST 1881.

Joseph's Coat.

BY DAVID CHRISTIE MURRAY.

CHAPTER XXII.

THERE was a memory somewhere for Joe Bushell in the face of his new acquaintance Mr. George Cheston, his old companion's younger brother—a suggestion which touched him curiously, perplexing him the while. It was not a memory of Cheston, for the young man was not like Cheston in the least. Was it—? no—Hang it! *What* was it? They could never have met before, of course, and yet Joe was certain that he had seen the face somewhere. The fact was that the young scoundrel was unworthily like his mother, and that it was his resemblance to her which at once attracted and puzzled his father. Joe felt, but could not trace, the likeness—could not identify it with anybody; but his heart warmed to the youngster.

‘And so,’ he said, ‘my uncle’s a great mine-owner, is he?’

‘One of the richest men in the district,’ said George, pulling away at one of his host’s cigars. ‘This is good tobacco.’ He was not going to be over-interested in the conversation, having a general notion that a gentleman born and bred ought to be really interested in nothing which does not concern himself. Not to admire was all the art he knew.

‘I suppose he’s still a bachelor?’

‘Quite superior to feminine blandishments, I fancy,’ said George. ‘One couldn’t fancy him making love under any sort of circumstances.’

‘No,’ said Joe, lingering on the word. ‘I suppose not. Has everybody quite given me up for dead on that side the water, do you know?’ He put this question with a short laugh which had no merriment in it, whatever other feeling might be there.

'Well,' answered George, casting himself luxuriously back in his chair and blowing a lazy cloud, 'I'm almost inclined to think they have. Syd has, I know.'

'It was an odd old place, as I remember it,' said Joe after a little pause. 'There used to be a lot of queer buildings about—gables and dormer windows, and so on. I suppose that's all changed?'

'Yes,' said George, his mind recurring to the Saracen, of whose altered condition he was of course unconscious. His companion struck his very thought.

'Their notions of an hotel in that part of the world used to be primitive,' said Joe, approaching the ground he wanted to get at with great caution. 'I suppose they haven't got to this pitch even yet?'—waving his hand abroad as he spoke.

'Not exactly,' George replied.

'The Saracen's Head was one of the oldest of those places in my time,' said Joe with apparent carelessness. 'Do you know it?'

George was blowing his nose again, and looked up a little flushed, perhaps by the violence of the exertion.

'I beg pardon?'

'The Saracen's Head,' said Joe again. 'Is it standing yet?'

'The Saracen?' said George with counterfeited reverie. 'The Saracen?'

Joe helped him to the topographical lines, and added:

'Old Sir Sydney, your father, always pulled up there for a glass of home-brewed when he rode over to the petty sessions, Wednesdays and Saturdays.'

'Ah, yes! I know it now,' said George with a creditably realistic air of sudden remembrance. 'Syd calls there sometimes in the same way. Yes, yes. I know it. Of course.' Before he had become altogether too grand a young man, he had indeed served with his own hands that glass of home-brewed the genial baronet loved. He bore the unexpected turn the talk had taken with great *sang-froid*, after the first inquiry had been made and answered.

'I used to be there a good deal myself,' said Joe, 'when I was a youngster. They had the first billiard-table there that ever was introduced to that part of the world. Old Banks used to keep it—Daniel Banks. I suppose he's gone, too?'

'I fancy not,' said George. 'I believe he has retired. Some family troubles, I think I heard.'

He felt his coolness under fire to be creditable to him.

'Family troubles?' asked Joe.

'I don't know, I'm sure,' George answered, yawning a ~~little~~, as if

the conversation bored him. But his companion was casting about in his mind how to get further, and the by-play was lost upon him.

'When I was a lad,' said Joe, hardening his heart for the leap, 'I used to think old Daniel's daughter the prettiest girl in the world. You don't know whom she married, do you?'

'Married?' said George, thrown off his guard for a second.

'Yes,' answered the other—'married.'

'You don't mean——? Confound it—what's the woman's name? —Dinah?'

'Yes, I do,' returned Joe. 'She married two- or three-and-twenty years ago.'

'I'll be hanged if she did,' said George with well-bred languor. 'She's an old maid.'

'What?' cried Joe. Then moderating his voice and manner, 'My uncle wrote and told me she was married, if I'm not mistaken.'

'Twasn't true, if he did,' said George, yawning outright this time.

'I think you must be mistaken,' said Joe. 'You must be.'

'Sure I'm not,' said George, casting his arms abroad and gaping lazily.

'But you scarcely remembered the house just now?'

'I remember it well enough now you call it to mind,' said George, recovering from his yawn. 'Syd used to call there, and he was a little sweet on Dinah, too, in a quiet sort of way. No harm in it, you know, for I believe she's always been a deuced good sort of woman—religious, you know; that sort of thing.' And the aristocratic youth yawned again, stretching forth his arms with luxurious abandonment. Perhaps, had his companion had a reason for watching, he might have caught a tone of tremor in the young rascal's voice, and have thought the want of interest overdone.

'Not married!' said Joe in a bewildered way. 'Then, why the deuce should my uncle George have said she was?'

'Made a mistake, I suppose,' said George, more languid and fine-gentlemanlike than ever. 'Tell you what makes me so sure about it. Day I left Liverpool I met old Bushell—beg your pardon—mean your uncle, you know—and he told me, just as a scrap of local news, that old Banks had retired, and that he and Miss Banks—what's her name?—Dinah—had gone away and left the place.'

Joe had *his* reasons for the disguise of emotion too. George, in his cunning, thought he saw it all. Joe Bushell and his sister would be contemporaries, and it was quite likely that young Joe

had been in love with her. His uncle George had probably invented the fiction of the marriage to prevent young Joe from making a bad match. It was not easy for him to think that a man so forgiving and generous could have told the lie in order to secure a hold of young Joe's fortune. It came easy to him to think ill of people as a rule, but he could not yet think any great evil of his benefactor.

And as for Joe himself, he had cherished in his own heart so long the memory of uncle George's ancient kindness that it was almost impossible to begin a new estimate of the man at this time of day. When he was friendless and alone, his uncle had sought him out and had given him a hundred pounds—a generous gift—a sum not lightly to be given away by anybody to a mere runaway young rascal of a nephew. Why should he have written to tell him that Dinah Banks had married?

'She was a very pretty girl,' said Joe, clearing his throat with difficulty. 'I should have thought she'd have had heaps of chances.'

'Ye-es,' returned George, rising and strolling to a window. 'I think I've heard so. But she's a middle-aged woman now, you know, and rather out of my line. I'm told Syd used rather to rave about her.'

Faithful to him! Faithful to him after all, through all these heavy years! It would have gone ill with errant Joe indeed, if there had been no heart-ache in the thought.

It is worth noticing, as a fact in the constitution of humanity at large, that whether I do my duty well or ill, or howsoever you do yours or leave it undone, we both alike expect the outer world to do its duty, to be faithful in the performance of its promises, and long-suffering in respect to injury, and generally to act up to a standard which we acknowledge to be beyond our reach. And, in like fashion, Joe had felt keenly at the time that Dinah might have waited a little longer. He acknowledged his own unworthiness with constant and deep abasement, but she might have been worthier. Out of that mood he had grown into excuses for her and explanations, and he had found a self-tormenting pleasure in thinking of her as a married woman with her family growing up about her, and himself a mere dim remembrance in her mind.

It had not all gone smoothly with the callow-whiskered, blue-eyed foolish lad who left home in so undignified and unmanly a fashion so many years ago,

Nobody ever told a story completely—not even a Chinese dramatist. For on every character in any story the influences of a whole world are pouring every day, and the most painstaking of

chroniclers must let some things be taken for granted. I cannot do more than indicate young Joe's history here. If you want to appreciate the outer changes which have come upon him, think of the alterations time has worked on any young fellow you may have known five-and-twenty years ago. A lithe figure grown set, a figure but an eagle's talon in the waist grown portly, a smooth face lined and bearded, an open brow corrugated, locks crisp and curled and golden turned to a darker shade and streaked with grey, and maybe a little thinned at top. Young Joe, whose folly was the fount and origin of this history, has lost his claim to the distinctive epithet, and is young no more.

I have never sought to conceal from myself my opinion of his conduct. He acted badly, criminally, like a fool. I know it. I admit it. But there are men whose failings we condone, whose follies we forgive, whose sins we pity. Let young Joe be of them. He was sinned against as well as sinning. Women who read this story will probably be hard upon him in their judgments—and will be right, beyond a doubt. But many years of poverty and remorse are in themselves hard judgment on a man ; and he had suffered, as you and I do when we misbehave ourselves ; and had grown wiser and better, as you and I sometimes fail to do.

The long-errant Joe has sinned and suffered and amended. Let us take him back again to friendship.

The story of a wild, disjointed life such as he had lived most of these years of absence would hardly pay for telling here. He did a hundred things for a living, and threw at none of them, until he got a berth aboard a river steamer, and after two or three years became a river pilot. Then, having in the course of two or three years more saved a little money, he went westward to Frisco, and there started a store in partnership with another Englishman, who was loud at morning, noon, and night with denunciations of American dishonesty. When they had made a nice little pile together, this true-born Briton took advantage of a fever from which his partner suffered, and, realising the whole estate, he fled, taking ship for Hong-Kong, and leaving Joe behind him, friendless, delirious with fever, and without one cent to chink against another. At this terrible juncture turned up a bearded ruffian, by name MacKane, who, by way of giving his own life-history the lie, nursed the stranger through his fever and saw him back to health again. MacKane had money, and thought well to invest it. He trusted Joe at sight, after the curious manner of his kind, and the two started a store on the old lines—Joe finding knowledge of the business, and MacKane providing the stock. The two threw amazingly in their business, and went in for land-jobbing with

equal success. Then MacKane, who was a noble fellow but a confirmed rowdy, fell sick of a revolver bullet and died, bequeathing everything to his partner. And so from small things to big and from big to bigger progressed Joe Bushell, and he was now here in New York to arrange the sale of a considerable property in a western town on the great Pacific line; a man firmly established on a broad business bottom, and highly respected by all who knew him—first for his dollars (dollars provide the shortest cut to judgment), and next for his sterling and blameless private character.

He had quite made up his mind to end his days in the country of his adoption, and was resigned to see England no more. But this most strange news of Dinah put all his resolutions out of joint. He could see now that he was in reality a thousand times as criminal as he had thought himself, self-condemning as his thoughts had always been. Not happy, not forgetful, not married and comforted by the love of children, but living to a cold and long-since widowed middle age. Ah! that made a difference. He tried to picture her as she would be after so long a space; but could do nothing but recall her as she said, ‘No, Joe, no; you couldn’t have the heart to leave me!’ And then again: ‘Go, and God bless you, my own dear, dear, ever dearest Joe!’ And then again: ‘Will you let me keep my marriage lines?’ His last failure towards her! And then the waving hand, the tear-soiled face, the pretty figure in white muslin, and the demurely-coquettish straw hat! He heard and saw again, though it was all so old and far away.

Meantime, as Joe sat unconsciously smoking, with the voice of his youth’s wife in his ears and her form in his eyes, his visitor stood at the window congratulating himself, in spite of a faint conscientious qualm, on the success of his assumption of his character. It was an odd chance which had thrown him into the company of a relative of his late employer’s; but the association was not likely to last long, and might be turned to some advantage while it lasted. For Joe, though five-and-twenty years since a runaway from home, had now a look of solid and settled prosperity, and his being in this swell hotel at all argued him fairly well-to-do. These Bushells had a knack of making money; and this one, so George argued naturally enough, would scarcely have spoken lightly of that lost quarter of a million, unless he himself had been well provided for. When a man is able to say of so vast a sum, ‘I am glad somebody else has it,’ because somebody else is a good fellow, it argues prosperity on his own part.

Joe, emerging from his reflections, broke in upon this reverie. ‘When do you think of going back to England, Mr. Cheston?’ ‘Well, I am not at all decided,’ said George, turning round

upon him. ‘I’ve been thinking of getting on for the prairies, or perhaps of seeing what sport the Dominion has to show.’

‘What do you say to a run across to San Francisco?’ asked Joe. ‘I’m settled there, and I’m thinking of taking a run over to the old country after going home to set things straight. Will you come across with me? You’ll get a good view of the continent, and we can make a stay here and there if you like. I am not in any hurry, and I’m so pleased at meeting a man from the old place that I shall really take it as a favour if you’ll come.’

‘Why, thank you,’ said the impostor; ‘you’re very kind. I should like the journey amazingly.’ The magnitude of the hotel bill had begun to frighten him. At the rate at which he was going, his resources would not last long.

So the thing was settled, and, whilst Joe waited for the arrangement of his business in New York, the two saw a good deal of each other. The prosperous trader was free with his money, and whatever they did together he paid for—an arrangement which met George’s views to a hair, though he made a conventional-propriety struggle in pretence of a desire to disturb it now and then. When Joe had known old Sir Sydney and his son, the family had not been wealthy, and he liked the young fellow none the less that he did not seem quite reckless in his expenditure. A man who took a liking for people readily, Joe soon bred a fancy for his companion, and was never weary of talking with him about the old place and the people he had known. He gave the young man an insight into his own experiences, and told him candidly of his first hard struggles in the land of his adoption; and he played, in short, the part of guide, philosopher, and friend to him.

They had known each other for a fortnight or thereabouts, when Joe turned upon the youngster and said:

‘Look here, Cheston. I can ask a favour of your brother’s brother, I know, and I am going to do it.’

‘Certainly,’ said young George, not quite in comfort. Was Bushell not so well-to-do as he had thought him?

‘I’ve told you already that I have an idea of running over to England. As you say, everybody no doubt thinks me dead and done for; but I want to have a look at the old place, and I don’t want it to be talked about. You needn’t tell anybody that you met me here, when you go back again. You can tell Syd, if you like’—he had fallen into George’s way of speaking of his old friend—‘and I think it’s more than likely I shall call upon him. But when a fellow’s been away as long as I have, there’s a sort of shamefacedness about going back again, and I’d rather that nobody knew

anything about it. I dare say it's a bit sentimental, but you won't say anything about me, will you ?'

'Decidedly not, since you wish me not to,' returned George.

'I'm not in a—in a downright hurry,' Joe continued, 'and I have a good many things to see to before I can start.' He was curiously reluctant to go back, and yet he felt that he could not help himself. To return to Dinah and offer her the fag-end of his life seemed base and cruel. She thought him dead. Let her think him so. It would be brutal to disturb her peace again at this late hour. And, even if he went at all, he longed for some companionship however slight, some living tie with the home he had deserted. 'Do you think we can manage to go back together ?'

'In how long ?' asked George.

'Well, when you like, in reason,' Joe answered. 'Say I shall be able to start in three months' time: would that suit you ?'

'Yes, I think so,' said George. It would be easy to dodge the fellow at the finish, and three months was a lift, certainly. If he could only rely upon a part of it, it would be something. 'That will suit me very well.'

'We could go to Syd together,' Joe suggested.

'Yes, of course,' replied George, with an inside vacuum at the fancy.

Matters being thus arranged, and Joe's business being shortly afterwards prosperously settled, they paid their bills—making a considerable inroad on George's reserves—and took the cars. They broke the journey here and there, and made it last them three weeks from start to finish. From the hour of leaving New York, Joe took upon himself the part of host, and insisted upon paying for everything. George could scarcely disguise the shock to his feelings which the bill at the great hotel afforded; and Joe, observing his discomfiture at that moment, was resolute in not permitting him to spend a dollar anywhere upon their joint expenses. This was comfortable; but, like other conditions in life, George found that his association with Mr. Joseph Bushell had its drawbacks. Joe made him keep a diary of his journey for Sir Sydney's perusal, and was always badgering George to write to him, and giving him messages, and pledging him to pledge dear old Syd to secrecy. And at last, on reaching San Francisco, Joe took the matter into his own hands.

'I say, Cheston, about that letter you're always promising to write to Syd. Do it now, there's a good fellow. Come now, here's pen, ink, and paper. We'll arrange what to say about our meeting and about my going over to England.'

'Leave a fellow alone a little while after dinner,' said George.

'I notice,' said Joe seriously, 'that you're a dilatory fellow, Cheston. Now—I mean it in a friendly way, I assure you—that's bad. Procrastination is one of the worst habits a young fellow can form. Come, now.'

He stood with a pen in one hand inviting George to come forward, and after a moment's pause secured obedience.

'Here,' said George, taking the pen and seating himself, 'tell a fellow what to say.' He feigned a little touch of sulkiness to hide his embarrassment.

'Very well,' said Joe. 'Put down the date and all that; now, "My dear Syd," or "My dear Brother," or however you write to him.'

"My dear old Syd,'" said George, sulkily writing.

'Very well. "My dear old Syd,—I have the very strangest news to give you. I am writing this letter under the roof of an old schoolfellow and friend of yours, Joe Bushell. I found him out almost by accident in New York. I told him that you had long since given him up for dead and buried. He was awfully glad to see a face from the old country, and especially a brother of yours. He was immensely surprised to learn who I was, and had no idea that the governor had married a second time. He has prospered very much out here, and thinks of running over with me to England, so that you must expect to see us both together. You will remember the circumstances under which he left home, and will understand what I am now about to ask. Pray say nothing about his projected visit. He is just coming over to see old places and one old friend—yourself. He does not intend to make himself known to anybody else. He desires me to put this to you with all needful strength, and of course in saying that I have said more than enough. He sends his most friendly regards. I will advise you of the probable time of our arrival."—All that down?'

'Yes,' said George, 'it's all down.'

'Very well. Now you can go on with your own affairs.'

'Oh, that's enough for a letter,' cried the young man with an air of disgusted fatigue; 'I hate letter-writing.'

'All right,' said Joe. 'Close up as soon as you like.'

"I am,'" murmured George, scrawling away, '"my dear old Syd, your affectionate brother,—George."

'Here's an envelope! address it,' said Joe, almost hilarious in manner. He was thinking of Dinah all the time, thinking with much bitter self-upbraiding, and it needed some bustle to keep his heart up.

"Sir Sydney Cheston, Bart.," murmured George, as he dashed

off the address in a sprawling and unclerkly hand, ““Worley Hall, Staffordshire, England.””

‘That’s right,’ said Joe, pulling at the bell. ‘Post that at once,’ he said, handing the letter to the maid who entered in answer to the summons. ‘And now,’ he cried, throwing himself into a chair and looking across at George with a face of resolve, ‘I’m bound to go. I wanted to go, and I couldn’t make my mind up, and now I’ve done it, because a promise *is* a promise, and the thing’s arranged.’

The actual writer of the letter was not quite at ease, but he consoled himself with the reflection that Sir Sydney Cheston’s amazement in Staffordshire could not greatly affect him in the United States. George wasn’t going back to England, if he knew it. He sate half-listening to his host’s anticipations and plans, half-thinking out his own scheme for dropping his host at the right point. He was fully made up on that easily-decided question of going back to England. The fear of recognition was multiplied there a thousand-fold ; here it was minimised. And, besides that, America was undoubtedly a better place to get on in than England.

But, in spite of these excellent reasons for avoiding England, he was doomed to go there ; and a chain of events, which may be very briefly summarised, dragged him thither with a force beyond all his powers of resistance. First link :—in the absence of his host at business, young George went gambling. Second link :—he lost, and was absolutely cleaned out. Third :—he was compelled by Joe’s discovery to admit the truth. Fourth :—Joe paid for his passage by the cars to New York, and for his passage by the steamer to Liverpool ; and, detecting an extraordinary and inexplicable desire on the young man’s part to cut and run, he watched him like a hen with one chicken, and gave him no opportunity for escape.

So they landed in Liverpool together ; and behold, whilst Joe was looking after the luggage, young George made a bolt with a solitary portmanteau, which belonged not to himself but to his host ; and Joe, to his amazement and chagrin, was left to face Great Britain alone. He was both mortified and bewildered, for it did not yet occur to him that his chance acquaintance was a pretender. He decided at last that his old chum Cheston kept a tight hand upon this younger brother, and that the lad was afraid to face him after his American extravagances.

‘But he must have thought poorly of me,’ said Joe, a little bitterly, ‘to fancy that I should split upon him.’

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE terrible text ate deep into old George's heart ; but remorse is not penitence, and he suffered all the unholy pangs of the one, and had none of the blessed pains of the other. He was not even safe from detection ; and it is possible that if he had been, the fires of conscience would have burned less dreadfully. He was getting to be old, and, what with his troubles and advancing age, he began to suffer pains and disabilities which were hard to bear. Eating and drinking used to be pleasant, and were so no longer. To a stupid man like old George it is hard to lose the pleasures of the table ; much harder than for another who has sources of enjoyment outside the range of the coarser senses. He had been used to work hard and to sleep soundly, and now work had no relish and night no rest worth talking of. Altogether, his road was thorny and full of fears.

Things went on for two or three weeks in pretty much the old fashion, when one day, as he sat alone in his private room, pipe in mouth, staring at the fire, a knock came to the outer door, and a minute later his housekeeper followed her own tap, and came in with a visiting-card pinched between finger and thumb in a corner of her apron.

'A gentleman to see you, sir,' said Mrs. Bullus.

'Show him in,' said the old man, and took the card uninterestedly. It fell from his fingers as he read 'Mr. John Keen, Solicitor, Wrethedale.'

He groped darkly on the floor to recover it, and seemed to grope darkly in his own mind to discover a meaning for it. John Keen entered ; and the old man, still feeling blindly for the card, looked up at him, with a face reddened by stooping, and lack-lustre eyes.

'Good day, Mr. Bushell,' said John, with formal politeness.

George ceased his blind search for the card and sat up, breathing somewhat thickly.

'Good day, Mr. Keen. Take a cheer. To what am I indebted—— ?'

'I do not suppose you will find me a welcome visitor, Mr. Bushell, when you know my business. You may remember a statement made to you with regard to the identity of your late private secretary.'

'Eh ?' said old George. 'Say that again !'

'On the day on which you gave George Banks into custody,' said John, slowly and distinctly, 'you received a visit from the

lady who was supposed to be his sister.' Old George said nothing, not having it in him to say anything just then ; but he glared at his visitor with fishlike eyes, in which there was no speculation. 'She told you the real nature of the relationship between them, and you professed to disbelieve her.'

'I said it was a pack o' lies,' said the miserable old rascal, 'an' I say so now.'

'Very well, Mr. Bushell,' said John, business-like. 'I am a lawyer, as you know. I am engaged by Mrs. Joseph Bushell to proceed against you for the recovery of her rights, and I am in a position to prove her claim. Here,' said John, producing a pocket-book and leisurely opening it, 'is a copy of the certificate of marriage between your nephew Joseph and Miss Dinah Banks, solemnised at Waston Church. Whatever property your brother Joseph possessed at his death was, in the absence of her husband, legally hers, and is still legally hers. There is no difficulty in the world as to the completeness of the proof, and I should advise you to make a judicious surrender.'

'Oh !' said old George with a heavy jeer, though his heart was muffled and his head was whirling, 'you'd advise me to mek a judicious surrender, would you ? That ain't cool at all, that ain't. Is it ? Oh dear me, no !'

'Mr. Bushell,' said John, copying a line from poor dear Sir Roger's torturer-in-chief, 'perhaps you would be surprised to hear that the original certificate of the marriage has been stolen from the register at Waston Church ?' The old man's jaw dropped; he laid a hand on each arm of his chair, and made as if to rise; but his limbs refused to obey him, his face turned purple, and the veins in his temples stood out like cords. 'Excuse me for a moment,' said John, and, rising, he opened the door. 'Come this way,' he called to some one outside.

The sexton entered, twirling his hat in both hands, and looking amazingly uncomfortable.

'Is this the gentleman who came to Waston Church a week or two ago, and asked to look at the register of marriages ?'

'That's the gentleman, sir,' said the sexton.

'Is this the gentleman who gave you a shilling to drink with ?—the gentleman whom you left alone in the vestry whilst you went out to get a pint of beer ?'

'Yes, sir,' said the sexton ; 'that's the gentleman, sir.'

'It's a pack o' lies !' cried the wretched old man, struggling to his feet. 'As sure as there's a Heaven above us, I never set eyes o' the man afore in all my born days. I'll tek my oath on it.' A judgment ? A sudden judgment from the Heaven he had invoked



'It's a pack o' lies!'

so wickedly? His head swam round and round; he felt with wandering hands for a support, and found none; there were splashes of alternate ink and fire in the silver mist which shut out everything about him; his muffled heart strove to beat as if the struggle would burst it. But he was desperate despite these fears. 'I swear it,' he stammered, groping blindly. 'It's a pack o' lies!'

He had only time once more to feel, with an access of his pains and terrors, that he had anew defied the threatened judgment, when down he went with a crash, striking the back of his head against the fender. John fell upon him, dragged him on to the hearthrug, tore off his stock, and, with one nervous effort, ripped his shirt open from collar to waistband. The old man had been drinking again; and the lawyer, seeing a carafe of water on the table, seized it, and began vigorously to splash at George's face.

'Ring the bell,' he said to the sexton. The man, who was horrified at the result of his identification of old George, fumbled at the bell-pull for nearly half a minute before he could command his trembling fingers, when he rang such a peal as brought the housekeeper in with a rush and an excited whirl of petticoats. 'Your master has fallen down in a fit,' said John, still dashing water into the unconscious face. 'Send for a doctor, without a minute's loss of time.'

Mrs. Bullus rushed from the room, screaming 'Jane!' and, the maid appearing, despatched her, with a flea in her ear. Jane fled weeping and breathless, and by good hap being recognised by the medical man was followed by him. For what with breathlessness and the terror and resentment inspired by the housekeeper's unprovoked assault upon her, the maid was speechless. The doctor appeared, somewhat winded, for he was a man of rather pursy habit, and unused to the display of pedestrian power.

'Hello, Keen!' he gasped. 'You here? What's the matter?' He was kneeling by old George's unconscious figure before the question was answered.

'I brought him very disturbing private news,' said John, kneeling beside the surgeon and speaking in a low tone, 'and he has had a fit over it.'

'We must get him to bed,' said the surgeon; and by his orders a sheet was procured and with some difficulty got under old George's solidly made frame. John Keen lifted at one side and the sexton at the other. The surgeon took the patient's head and the housekeeper his legs, and in this order they stumbled up-stairs with him, and laid him down. Then all but the surgeon and the housekeeper waited without to know the skilled man's verdict, and by-and-by it came. Whether severe or slight the doctor was not

yet certain; but there was concussion of the brain, and old George would see to no business, howsoever important, for a while to come.

'I suppose I needn't tell you,' said John to the sexton, 'that it will be a great deal wiser in you to hold your tongue than to talk about these things.'

'I shan't say nothink,' replied the sexton.

John had no other reason for secrecy than his desire to keep Dinah's name out of the public mouth; but his caution was not wasted on the sexton, who was more than a little timid as to the possible result of his own share in the matter. When once the young lawyer had written to Dinah, apprising her of Mr. Bushell's sudden illness and its result of delay, he found time hang heavily on his hands. He had no desire to encounter any of his old acquaintances just then, so he went into Birmingham, and, putting up at an hotel there, awaited the doctor's decisive opinion on the case. He blamed himself for the precipitancy with which he had brought old George to bay, and told himself that he might much more reasonably have explained the evidence to him. In short, like other people, he felt wiser after the event than he had been before it.

Two or three days went by, and the doctor was not sanguine. Mr. Bushell had no relatives to consult; and the medical man, acting on his own initiative, brought in a great physician from the neighbouring great town. The physician was no more sanguine than the surgeon; and, after lingering for a week, John went back to Wrethedale, leaving instructions with the surgeon to wire to him in case of any decisive alteration either way. Being arrived at home, he hastened to inform Dinah of his return, and she called upon him within an hour of her receipt of his message. He laid her marriage certificate in her hands, and explained the whole result of his journey. Dinah turned pale and shook a little as she read through the document, but she did not say much.

'It was a pity I didn't know o' this before, Mr. Keen.' That was all.

'A great pity,' said John, commiserating all her troubles. 'But there is no doubt of your legal title to the property, and no doubt that you will get it.'

She took the certificate home and showed it to Ethel, who kissed her for sole congratulation. It was not easy for Ethel to congratulate Dinah upon anything yet, though she read the mother's heart and sympathised with her. The days went on, and no decisive news came of old George's state. John learned that he had recovered partial consciousness, and that he seemed to have a half-memory of the fact that some trouble had befallen him.

But out of this state, so the doctor's letters said, he had slipped back again into complete oblivion, and it was, and would be for a long time to come, impossible to rouse him to the discussion of any affairs, howsoever important they might be. The doctor's letters, indeed, though cautiously expressed, seemed to lead to the conclusion that old George would never attend to business any more. In course of time that view was partly disproved, but for the present there was nothing to do but wait. The criminal's sentence had more than half its time to run, and before he could be freed it was ten to one the matter would be decided in some way.

So on that side affairs necessarily stood over. Far away in New York the released convict had encountered his father, and had gone away to San Francisco with him, and had returned to England—against his will—with him, and had finally deserted him at Liverpool before old George was fit to be spoken to, or had clearly recalled to mind the cause of the mischief which had come upon him.

Never in his life had Joe Bushell felt so forlorn as when he stood alone, after the lapse of more than five-and-twenty years, on English soil; not even when for the first time the sense of conscious loneliness descended on him aboard ship. There were resolves in him then, and high hope, and he was going, in spite of all failings and follies behind him, to be a man, and to make a home for Dinah. And how had he fulfilled the promise?—how clung to the hope? Bitter questions, that brought sad answers in an echo—How?

He had made a fortune; not so much as he had left behind, not a fourth part so much, perhaps, yet still a fair handful of money: and of what use was it to him? He ought to have known better than to believe in that story of Dinah's marriage. He ought to have returned to England—he ought never to have left home—he ought to have acted like a man, and not like a cad and a coward.

There are few of us who have not played the fool, few of us who have nothing to confess, nothing of which to be absolved by devout penitence, nothing to have scourged out of us by human forgiveness. But there are not many of us who for a quarter of a century have crushed a heart that ought to have been happy. And Joe was a good-hearted fellow, kindly and gentle, always ready to do a kindness, and never, in spite of youth's hot blood, willing to damage anybody. He had begged pardon of the Reverend Paul in his heart a thousand times, and of his old chum Cheston. And as for Dinah, she had been to him, notwithstanding her light forgetfulness, something quite outside the sphere of common things and common people. He had never fallen in love again, and had lived apart

from her in such chastity as few men—very few—have a right to boast of. There was some selfish comfort there, perhaps. If he could get a sight of her, only for a moment, and could breathe to his own heart the words, ‘I have been as faithful all these years to your remembrance as you have been to mine,’ it might have something of a balm in it for the sore future which he saw before him. But, look at it as he might, life seemed a poor business. Tragedy, and folly, and commonplace! Commonplace, folly, and tragedy!

So he stood like an alien on English ground, and wished himself back in his Western home again. Yet, being where he was, he must go on and fulfil his purpose. He wrote from an hotel in Liverpool that night to Cheston, saying nothing yet of Master George’s desertion of him, and, without waiting for an answer, he started.

I have left you to fancy Sir Sydney Cheston’s sensations on reading the letter of his *soi-disant* brother. Cheston’s imagination, never very vivid, left him helpless at this time, and he was at first unable to conceive any possible circumstances under which it could have been written.

‘What the dickens——?’ he began, and stopped again, feeling—like the famous American—unequal to the occasion. ‘Who the deuce——?’ he began again, and again he failed. ‘Why in the name of——!’ There was nothing big enough to conjure with in a case like this. It was the most bewildering and amazing thing he had ever met with in his lifetime. ‘My dear old Syd!’ and ‘your affectionate brother, George!’ The audacity of the confounded thing! Who ever heard the like? And all on a sudden he leaped at something very like the truth. Was Joe Bushell alive after all, and had he met some impostor out there who was trading on a good name, and who professed to be a brother of his? Weeks went by, and he heard no more of the matter until he received Joe’s letter, when he instantly and impetuously wired to Liverpool and followed his telegram. But his old friend had started before the telegram was despatched, and the two had a day at cross-purposes. The returned exile, leaving his traps at a Birmingham hotel, drove over to his friend’s house, and learned from the butler that Sir Sydney had gone to Liverpool. Cheston about the same time found that Joe had left his hotel and had taken train for Birmingham. There was nothing for either of them but to turn back again, Joe leaving his temporary address in the butler’s hands.

Everything leads to something, and the baronet’s impetuous rush hastened matters in relation to this history. John Keen was staying in the same hotel with the returned wanderer. Neither of

them had ever seen the other, and neither had the thinnest ghost of an idea of the other's importance to him. John had received intelligence of a revival in old George, and was bent on taking advantage of it, if that were possible.

The two were alone, at the fall of a dismal and rainy evening, seated at extreme distance from each other in a big coffee-room, when in burst a man who glared round in the dusk of the place and went out again.

'I beg pardon,' said the stranger, rising and advancing a step towards John Keen. 'Can you tell me if that was Sir Sydney Cheston ?'

'It was,' said John ; and the stranger made a dash after the baronet.

'Cheston !' he shouted down the corridor.

Back came the impetuous Cheston.

'Who's that ?'

'Don't you know me ?' asked the wanderer.

'Let's have a look at you,' cried the baronet, dragging him to a window. 'By gad, it *is* you, after all ! Bushell, old man, I'm glad to see you. Confound it all, I *am* glad. Why, Joe, old boy, we'd given you up for dead this five-and-twenty years. Where *have* you sprung from ? Got a private room ? I should have known you anywhere!—anywhere ! You're deuced little changed—deuced little. Have you dined ? Where's the bell ? Well, I *am* glad to see you.'

Shaking hands the while, Cheston shouted this welcome at top of his cheery voice. Joe's eyes were a little dim and his throat was husky.

'It does a fellow's heart good,' said Joe, 'to see an old face again. How *are* you ?'

All this was in John Keen's hearing, and the young lawyer sat like one petrified. Here, then, was the wicked wanderer back again ! John had his theories, like other people ; and, from the moment when Dinah had completed her story, he had made up his mind about errant Joe. There was no doubt in his mind that young George got the black patch in his heart from his father. A better woman than Dinah John confessed that he had never known. He would and could believe no ill of her; but he had a great faith in breed, and he believed that out of an honest father and mother came honest children, and no other. Thus, Dinah being in John's eyes a paragon of womanly virtues, and her son being an arrant rascal, it was necessary to suppose that the lad inherited his villainy from his father. And the father had undoubtedly been a bad lot. He had left his wife widowed all this time, had never written to

her, never troubled his head about her, and, after inveigling her into a secret marriage to begin with, he had with low cunning carried away her marriage lines, and left her to bear the burden of a most undeserved and bitter shame.

So John Keen, when the first shock of amazement was over, made no ado about the matter, but, rising in cold wrath, he walked quietly along the room and tapped Joe on the shoulder.

'Forgive me, Sir Sydney, for interrupting this meeting with an old friend.'

'Hello, Keen!' said Cheston. ' Didn't see you. How are you? See you in an hour or two. I'm engaged just now.'

'One moment,' said John. ' Are you,' turning to Joe, ' the son of Joseph Bushell and the nephew of George Bushell?'

'I am,' said Joe, speaking somewhat hardly, since he recognised hostility in the questioner's tone.

' You ran away from home in eighteen-fifty?'

' I did,' said Joe. ' What then?'

' I have something for your private ear, sir, which I will trouble you to listen to at your earliest convenience.'

Cheston stared from one to the other.

' May I ask you who you are, and what your business is?' inquired Joe, taking measure of his man through the dusk of the rainy evening.

' My name is John Keen, and I am a solicitor. I reside at Wrethedale, the town to which (as perhaps you know) Daniel Banks and his daughter Dinah have retired.'

' Cheston,' said Joe, looking a little grey, ' there's something in this—something that I ought to know at once. You know this gentleman? ' indicating John.

' Perfectly,' said the troubled Cheston, still staring from one to the other. ' But what the dickens is it all about, Bushell? '

' That I have to learn,' Joe answered. ' Wait a moment.' He crossed the room, rung the bell, and returned. ' How long,' he demanded of John, ' will it take you to make your communication? '

' Ten minutes,' said John in answer.

' Very well,' said Joe; and at that moment the waiter entered. ' Waiter, show this gentleman to a private room,' pointing to Cheston. ' And, Cheston, you'll order dinner, won't you? Let it be a good one,' he said with ill-assumed vivacity. ' Here! We'll leave it with the waiter. Get the best dinner you can as soon as you can. You'll excuse me for ten minutes, won't you? '

' Certainly,' said the baronet, with his welcome and jollity somehow chilled within him. ' I'll go into the smoking-room. You'll find me there.'

'Very good,' said Joe. 'Dinner for two in a private room. Have a fire, and make things cheerful. Plenty of candles. No gas. And get a good dinner, and be sharp about it. Now, sir, I am at your service. This way, if you please.'

John followed, and Joe led the way into his bedroom. There he lit the gas, started a cigar, motioned John to a chair, and waited for him. He read enmity in the young man's manner, and was at a loss at present for the ground of it.

'A few months back,' began John, 'I was made the repository of a secret. A lady for whom I entertain a profound respect came to me, and on very weighty grounds confessed that the name she bore was not her own, and that she was not, as everybody who knew her supposed her to be, a single woman, but had long been married, and that the young man who passed as her brother was her son.'

Joe's cigar went out, and he arose with a trembling hand to relight it. John went on.

'The lady's husband had deserted her—it is no business of mine to express an opinion on the case, and I will deal only with the facts—a few months after marriage, and had promised, on their parting, to send her the certificate of their marriage. He never sent it. She was ignorant of the world, and knew nothing of the law. She believed that the want of the certificate legitimised her child and annulled her marriage. Her mother shared in that belief, and entered into a pious fraud with her by which, as they both supposed, the lady's honour would be saved. The child was bred as the child of his grand-parents, and was brought up in ignorance of his father's existence.'

Joe's cigar was out again, but he made no effort to relight it.

'In time the boy's grandmother—supposed by all except her daughter to be his mother—died, and his mother, unable to claim or exert more than a sister's influence and authority, endured supreme unhappiness. The boy went to the bad—not at once, but gradually. He is, at this hour——' Incensed as he was against the deserter of his wife, John needed all his heart to launch the blow. Joe's fictitious gaiety about the dinner had hardened him, and his knowledge of the bitter and undeserved agonies poor Dinah had endured made the loyal-hearted young lawyer almost pitiless to the man before him. And yet, Joe was not like an unfeeling scoundrel; and if ever a bronzed and handsome face looked troubled in the world, so did the face John looked at. Yet it was his clear duty to tell the tale at once, and bring this man home to a sense of his responsibilities. So he tried back, and

struck straight out. After a lengthy pause—‘He is, at this hour, in prison for forgery!’

‘My God!’ cried Joe with a groan. This was his first news of the birth of his son, and it need scarcely be said that it was terrible. The agony in his voice hit the lawyer hard; but he went on sternly, spurred by his partisanship for the suffering woman and his anger at the husband’s base neglect.

‘He was engaged,’ said John, ‘as Mr. George Bushell’s private secretary, and he signed the name “George Bushell” to a cheque for three hundred pounds. Had he known it, he was legally entitled to the name, and his mother was entitled to the money.’

‘Did he know it?’ Joe asked almost wildly. There was a gleam of light there.

‘No,’ answered John. ‘He did not know it. But when the news of his arrest came to his mother’s ears, she made an appeal to the prosecutor. She laid bare to him the secret of the prisoner’s birth, and implored him not to send one of his own flesh and blood to prison and disgrace. He drove her from his house insultingly, and refused credence to her story. The young man was tried, and sentenced to two years’ imprisonment. Eleven months of that term, or nearly, have yet to expire.’

‘My God!’ Joe groaned again, and burst on a sudden into weeping so wild and passionate that John was dumb before him. The punishment had come home, then—home. He—he deserved it all, and more than all; and yet it was not his to bear, but hers. He *had* loved her, he *had* loved her. And this was what the white accusing unaccusing face had meant as it haunted his memory all these years. The little, innocent, gay maid—harmless, as harmless as a dove, as unfitted to fight the world as a dove to fight with hawks—and he had left her to this terrible fate! Incredible cruelty and baseness!

The storm raged itself out at last, and he arose from his knees.

‘Tell me,’ he said brokenly, ‘whatever else there is to tell.’

John spoke again, but in a changed voice.

‘Your wife confided her secret to one living creature only—a young lady to whom your son was engaged to be married before the discovery of his crime.’

The listener groaned anew, and once more John paused.

‘Go on,’ said Joe; ‘go on.’

‘Her friend advised her that the loss of the certificate was no bar to her right to whatever property her husband’s father had died possessed of; and for the sake of her son—to save him from future temptation and misery—she determined to attempt to

establish her claim. As a first step she went to Waston Church, and discovered that the register of her marriage had been abstracted.'

'Abstracted?'

'Abstracted; stolen. Suspicion fell upon Mr. George Bushell, as the only person who had known the secret of the marriage, and the only person except your wife and son who was interested in it. It was discovered that he had been to the church to examine the register—that he had sent out the sexton with a gift of a shilling to get a drink of beer—and I confronted him with the sexton. Before he had fairly heard the charge, he cried out that he had never seen the man before, and fell down in a fit, from the effects of which he has not yet recovered. His illness has stayed proceedings on our part, and your arrival may alter the complexion of things altogether. Mrs. Bushell, your wife, is strongly averse to any prosecution of Mr. George Bushell, and I do not think that any legal proceedings would have been necessary, in any case. As a matter of fact, we had hold enough upon him without having recourse to the law.'

'My father,' said Joe, looking up with an awful face, 'made no will.'

'He made no will, and in your absence his brother inherited everything. That has been a matter of common talk ever since I can remember.'

'And my son is in gaol?'

'Yes.'

'Mr. Keen!'

'Yes?'

'Do me a favour. Dine with Cheston. Tell him everything. The people tell me he is a magistrate. You can advise together. Are there any means of mitigating the sentence? We might compel my uncle to join in an appeal to the authorities. Talk it over with Cheston. I will join you in an hour or two. Will you do this?'

'I will do what I can,' said John.

Joe opened the door, and John Keen walked out of the room. His opinion of the runaway husband was not yet changed, but it was shaken. And whilst he dined with Sir Sydney, and, to that genial man's amazement, told the tale in full, Joe was kneeling in his own chamber, weeping, with such repentant and atoning tears as most men—God be thanked for it!—have never had the need to shed.

CHAPTER XXIV.

I HAVE said before, though without any special originality, that even a worm will turn. Young George found his companion's watchful and friendly benevolence intolerable. Escape became a necessity, and he fled. He was conscious of some meanness in it, and he knew that his promises of an amended life had scarcely been fulfilled. But then, all along, circumstances had been against him. The change of destination and the change of name had been essentials, and who could have foreseen the dangers they carried in their train? Not he. There was no comfort in the rogue's reflections on the reception Sir Sydney Cheston would be likely to give his guest, or on the questions which would be asked, and the answers which would perforce be given. For young George was one of those who liked to stand well in the general opinion, and he was keenly sensitive to opinions adverse to himself, even when he was out of the way of them. To do him full justice, he thought what an ass he had been to gamble. Euchre and poker were not his form; he knew next to nothing about them; and if ever he played again at any game of mingled chance and skill, it should not be in a game in which he was a learner. And now, to get away from that importunate companion of his, he had been compelled to sacrifice his luggage, and had secured in exchange for it only a single portmanteau, the contents of which would probably be useless to him.

A day or two before the voyage ended, George had approached his travelling companion.

'I say, Bushell,' he had said, with a certain air of graceful regret and reluctance, 'you've acted like a brick to me, and I'm quite ashamed, you know, to ask you for anything more. But old Syd is a pretty tough customer for a younger brother to deal with, and if I have to go to him for coin directly I get home I shall have a wigging. I don't mind that so much, but he's a good fellow is Syd, and I don't want to vex him. Would you mind letting me have a tenner just to be able to sport a little money in front of him till I can square myself again?'

'Of course, of course,' said Joe; and produced a hundred-dollar bill, which George got cashed by the steward. So that, in spite of extravagances, he was not quite forlorn when he bolted from Joe's overwhelming benevolence.

He did not care about going to any first-rate hostel here, lest Joe should find him again; and so he went to a third- or fourth-rate house, and lay there *perdu* for a time until the coast should be

clear. Then he took train for Newcastle, and hung about for a day or two, making faint efforts to obtain employment. These were attended with such ill results, in the way of inquiry after references and the like, that he gave them up in disdain. His little stock of money dwindled and dwindled. He was in debt at the house he stayed at beyond his means of paying, and, being unreasonably bothered for his bill, he took a high tone with the landlord, and assured him with a lofty air that he was troubling the wrong sort of man, that the remittances he expected would inevitably reach him on the morrow, and that he—young George—would never again use the landlord's house in any future visits he might make to the town. The landlord—half suspicious, but half imposed on—consented to wait yet another day; and young George, surmising that in all probability the remittances were already at the bank, whilst his letters had been somehow delayed, went out to see, and forgot to go back again. Joe Bushell's portmanteau and its contents scarcely paid the landlord; but they consoled him partly, and young George went upon his way. From Newcastle-on-Tyne to Durham, to begin with. Whilst his money lasted, he was not the man to deny himself; so he ate a fair dinner, and even indulged in the luxury of a bottle of wine. Then, on the morrow, he discharged his bill, seeing no way to leave the house without having first gone through that ceremony, and, being nearly cleaned out by this time and in a mood of some depression, he marched out of the town on foot. In a while, the weather clearing and the sun shining out with gaiety, his mood also cleared, and he went along with a sense of exhilaration. He fed at a little wayside public-house, and left the people impressed with the grandeur of his manners, and his affability. He wandered on, without aim or prospect, sometimes in absurd good spirits, sometimes gloomy. Days went by, and his last copper was gone; his shirt-cuffs and collar had grown more than equivocal in aspect; his beard had effected a stubbly growth; his clothes seemed all the worse for their good origin, in their dustiness and seediness; his boots began to give way, and he was sinking fast into an abject look which suited his condition. But as yet no very terrible physical troubles had been encountered. The weather was mild and fine—unusually so for the season of the year; and he wandered on in a dull contentment, crossed only now and then with a sense of the coming miseries and the wickedness and folly of the past. He was really hungry, for the first time in his life; and, nearing a town, he retired behind a haystack, took off his waistcoat, rolled it up into a bundle, buttoned his coat, and ran the waistcoat in at mine uncle's. It realised two shillings; and on this he supped,

slept, and breakfasted. In the next town an old slop-seller made a bargain with him—four shillings and a patched workman's suit for coat and trousers, a cloth cap and a shilling for his hat. The five shillings lasted him a day, and he went on aimless and at ease. A day later he landed at the workhouse.

Now, this was something of a blow for him; but he got a certain mental luxury out of it, notwithstanding. When he walked into the police station, he was pleased at the look of inquiry his demand for workhouse relief extorted from the accustomed official at the desk. It was a tribute to his gentility. Many a gentleman had come to this condition before. Why not again in his case? He felt a certain stoicism, too, which seemed to do him credit under the circumstances. There was that curious self-deceptive sense in him which is perhaps only the property of the born pretender; and it was so distinct that he felt an absolute pride in flaunting before the accustomed official eyes the poverty of one so evidently cultured and well-bred. He was audience as well as dramatist and player, and the situation was certainly singular.

Yet, when he had answered the official inquiries, had received his ticket, and got into the street again, he seemed to feel that everybody knew he was going to the workhouse, and he found that sensation oppressive. The policeman had directed him thither, and the road was plain enough; but he dodged about by-streets to avoid observation until he lost the way, and had to ask anew to be directed. He chose to put the question to an old woman; and she in answer raised her hands and said, ‘Eh, dear me!’ before she gave him the information he needed. That pleased him too, though it was not altogether pleasant. He was evidently a gentleman, or the old woman would not have been astonished.

I have felt over and over again a sort of baseness in telling this young man's story. Can a writer, any more than other people, touch pitch and not be defiled? But let me task your impatience and control my own a little further. I shall have pointed a moral with him before I have done, though he may scarcely have served to adorn a tale.

The gates of the workhouse were vast and prison-like, and they reminded him of recent experiences. After some looking up and down, he found an iron bell-pull and tugged at it with a result so astounding in the way of noise that he was borne down by the exigence of his own summons, and felt abashed when an angry porter came out of a small door round a projecting buttress, and demanded with some asperity to know what the row was

about. George tendered his ticket almost with meekness ; but when the porter made further objections to the disturbance of workhouse tranquillity, the reduced nobleman began to take a haughty air with him.

'I beg your pardon, I am sure,' said George, in the most aristocratic-sounding drawl he could command. 'This is my first experience in this line. I shall probably learn bettah by-and-by.'

'Let me see,' said the porter, with his head on one side and his hands in his pockets. 'When was you here last ? Jannywerry, I think. Yes ; it *was* Jannywerry.'

George surveyed this vulgarly suspicious person with calm scorn, answered his questions with all possible brevity, and followed him into the casual ward like Charles the First on his way to execution—so tranquil his contempt, so resigned his martyrdom.

In the casual ward were already a dozen wayfarers, sitting listlessly on benches near the wall. They looked up when the newcomer entered, and looked down again ; and never a word they said, until the porter had disappeared, when one began to sing an unrefined ditty of Moll and Meg, unmeet for ladies. Now, our young nobleman, *Astrea redux*, had never been particular to a shade of morals in a song until now ; but he spoke out, after a while, with a very effective drawl :

'Don't you think you might sing that blackguard song to yourself, if you *must* sing it ?'

They all looked up again at this interruption, and the singer was palpably discomfited.

'I quite agree with *you*, sir,' said a broken-looking, dirty grey man in a corner. 'I've seen better days myself, and I feel that sort of thing offensive.'

'It ain't quite the thing,' said another ; and a confirmatory murmur ran about the place.

'The gentleman 'll get used to it bymeby,' said one sturdy tramp.

'I respectfully venture to hope that I shall not,' returned the aristocrat of the tramp ward ; and again there was a weary murmur of approval.

At this juncture the porter returned, followed by a professional pauper, who, being a professional, had a natural disdain for amateurs, and treated them with lofty *hauteur* as he handed round blocks of dry bread, and tin cans of a tepid liquid which smelt of rancid bacon.

'If things goes on like this,' said the sturdy tramp, smelling at the liquid with a distasteful look, 'I shall smash another lamp

or two, or rip my togs up, or do summat, an' get another month. They feeds you ten times as well in quod as they does when you're on the spike.'

'And pray what may the spike be?' asked George with a mighty condescending air.

'Why, this is the spike, my noble sportsman,' said the sturdy tramp; 'an' quod's the shop where they cut your 'air for nothin'. Never been there, I s'pose?'

'Don't take any notice of him, sir,' said the dirty grey man. 'Them as was born in a pig-sty can put up with dirty litter, but I've seen better days myself, and it's easy to see that you're a cut above this.'

'Ye-es,' returned George, 'I hope that's tolerably apparent. This is my first experience.'

'You needn't be so blooming proud about it,' said the sturdy tramp, who alone of the room's occupants seemed unabashed by George's tone and aspect. 'It's no partic'lar credit to be here.'

To this the fallen nobleman answered only by a glance of calm disdain, at which the sturdy tramp chuckled with ostentatious merriment. George, being really hungry, ate his bread, but eschewed the rancid-smelling liquid, and the dirty grey man, seeing this, begged leave to appropriate it.

'It's warm an' it's wet,' said the dirty man; 'an' that's about all you can say for it. But it is a comfort, too, when a cove's as cold inside as I am.'

In this particular workhouse the ordeal by water, made famous some years ago by the Amateur Casual, was not practised, but the tramps were all bundled to bed immediately after supper in a common room like an ill-favoured barrack. George turned up his nose at the tumbled herden which did duty for linen, and, but for the interference of the professional pauper, who saw them all to bed, would honestly have preferred to sleep in his clothes. Perforce he accepted the professional's dictum, and undressed; and having, in pursuance of the pauper's orders, rolled his clothes into a bundle with the shirt outside, he got into bed and lay there in the early darkness, indisposed to sleep, and compelled for a while to face his own reflections. He was not so miserable as he deserved to be, and his chief misery sprang from a bitter resentment to the world, which even now seemed to his own mind to have used him ill. Naturally, with young George self-preservation was the first law of nature; and now that things had come with him to this low ebb, it was full time to think of means for taking the tide again. His father and Dinah were well-to-do, and it was a shame that he should beg his bread whilst people of his own flesh and blood lived in comfort. Yet, they were lost to him. It was impossible for him to go to his

old home, to face his late employer, or run the risk of being seen by people who had known him ; and how to trace his relatives by any other means he could not tell. Tired of turning over fruitless projects in his mind, he fell asleep, and did not awake until the clanging of a great bell mingled with his dreams, and last night's professional pauper turned up again to awaken the amateur contingent. Then he dressed, and presently, to his huge disgust, found himself face to face with a big pile of stones, on a raised stone bench, with instructions from the porter to see that he broke that heap up nice and small. ‘Like this,’ said the porter, producing a sample handful. George went to work reluctantly and clumsily, and hammered with small result upon the stones, but much to the damage of his hands and the stiffening of his muscles. After five hours’ labour his work was criticised by the porter, who expressed unqualified disapproval of it in regard both to quality and quantity, but forbore to detain him for the completion of his task. George, with a certain meek grandeur, accepted and consumed his morning’s rations, washed in a bucket of water which everybody used in turn, and took his way into the streets of the town. The dirty grey man crawled alongside.

‘Which way do you think of going?’ he asked.

‘I don’t know,’ said George haughtily. ‘Not yours.’

‘I know the line along between here and Chester,’ said the grey man, unabashed by this rebuff ; ‘and I can put you up to the coves to go to. A bloke as can patter like you can ought to make a tidy thing of it if he’s only along with somebody as knows the line.’

George capitulated.

‘Where are you going?’

The man laid down his route, and the two started in partnership. Their luck varied. The dirty grey man had not boasted in vain, for he knew the road and its inhabitants ; but it was not always that George’s tale succeeded in melting the heart of his listener. This nicely assorted pair kept, however, from the workhouse, and there fell upon the younger wanderer’s spirit a sort of dull contentment in the life to which he had fallen. He told his tale so often that the true story became mythical and the lie looked true.

But, after a long spell of wandering, there came upon the companions a time of famine. The old vagrant got out of the line he knew, and in one or two cases mendicancy became dangerous, and they made their way out of some towns double-quick, lest the police should be set upon their heels. Workhouse fare and workhouse labour day after day, and wretched weather from town to town, until the fallen grandee grew sick and desperate. They

crawled along, skirting the borders of the principality, until within a four days' journey of the town of Borton, and at that point young George's piteous aspect and tenor-sounding voice of culture drew a shilling from a charitable maltster. With that shilling George bought, amongst other things, a sheet of letter-paper, an envelope, and a stamp, and in the sickness and misery of his heart found pluck enough to write to John Keen, his old comrade.

'I have nothing to say in excuse for myself,' he wrote; 'not a word to advance in extenuation. But I can have deserved no more than I have endured, bad as I have been, and I beg you for pity's sake to let me know the address of my father and my sister, that I may write to them for a little money to go abroad with and begin life anew. I am destitute, so destitute that I have not eaten a decent meal for a month. My feet are bare, my clothes in rags. I have suffered so much for my wrong-doing that even an enemy would pity me if he could see me. I shall walk on from here to Borton, and shall arrive there in four days. How I shall live for that four days God knows, but I am compelled to move about from place to place to get workhouse shelter and a casual tramp's poor fare. I implore you to keep this communication secret from everybody, and not to deny my request. Ill as I have behaved, I am sure my own people will not leave me to die in this horrible slow way. I am not worthy to sign myself your friend.'

'Your wretched companion in happier days,

'GEORGE BANKS.

'P.S. Address me at the post-office at Borton.'

Of course it was in the nature of the man that he should water this epistle with his tears, and that he should accept them as a good sign in himself, and their palpable marks upon the paper as a likely means to move his old companion. He posted the letter, and trudged along in brighter weather. With the prospect of a possible and even probable post-office order from John Keen in his mind, he picked a quarrel with his dirty grey comrade and parted from him, not feeling inclined to share any portion of his gains.

He was trudging along with bent head and sore feet towards the close of his second day of the new hope which sprang from his letter, and was approaching the little country town where lay his refuge for the night. The sun was sinking, the skies were filled with mellow tranquil light, the upper clouds were golden and the lower all alive with rosy blushes. The town lay before him and below him at a distance of perhaps a mile, its slated roofs shining after a passing shower like silver. As he stood wearily, sick in body, broken and wobegone, with thin tears in his eyes, staring before

him at the valley and the little town, a lady came round the corner of the road and walked leisurely towards him without a glance. But as she approached him, there broke from his lips such an inarticulate cry, and he shrank on a sudden in such an attitude of shame and terror, that she turned in surprise to look at him and stood still. Slowly he lifted his face, haggard and bearded, weather-stained and waysoiled, and the sudden flash of terror and amazement in the lady's eyes told him that, in spite of all the changes which had come upon him, he was known.

The little town a mile away was Wrethedale, and the girl was Ethel Donne.

(*To be continued.*)

A Family History.

ALTHOUGH the roses, like many other highly respectable modern families, cannot claim for themselves any remarkable antiquity—their tribe is only known, with certainty, to date back some three or four millions of years, to the tertiary period of geology—they have yet in many respects one of the most interesting and instructive histories amongst all the annals of English plants. In a comparatively short space of time they have managed to assume the most varied forms; and their numerous transformations are well attested for us by the great diversity of their existing representatives. Some of them have produced extremely beautiful and showy flowers, as is the case with the cultivated roses of our gardens, as well as with the dog-roses, the sweet-briars, the may, the blackthorn, and the meadow-sweet of our hedges, our copses, and our open fields. Others have developed edible fruits, like the pear, the apple, the apricot, the peach, the nectarine, the cherry, the strawberry, the raspberry, and the plum; while yet others again, which are less serviceable to lordly man, supply the woodland birds or even the village children with blackberries, dewberries, cloudberries, hips, haws, sloes, crab-apples, and rowenberries. Moreover, the various members of the rose family exhibit almost every variety of size and habit, from the creeping silver-weed which covers our roadsides or the tiny alchemilla which peeps out from the crannies of our walls, through the herb-like meadow-sweet, the scrambling briars, the shrubby hawthorn, and the bushy bird-cherry, to the taller and more arborescent forms of the apple-tree, the pear-tree, and the mountain ash. And since modern science teaches us that all these very divergent plants are ultimately descended from a single common ancestor—the primæval progenitor of the entire rose tribe—whence they have gradually branched off in various directions, owing to separately slight modifications of structure and habit, it is clear that the history of the roses must really be one of great interest and significance from the new standpoint of evolution. I propose, therefore, here to examine the origin and development of the existing English roses, with as little technical detail as possible; and I shall refer for the most part only to those common and familiar forms which, like the apple, the strawberry, or the cabbage rose, are already presumably old acquaintances of all my readers.

The method of our inquiry must be a strictly genealogical one.

For example, if we ask at the present day whence came our own eatable garden plums, competent botanists will tell us that they are a highly cultivated and carefully selected variety of the common sloe or blackthorn. It is true, the sloe is a small, sour, and almost uneatable fruit, the bush on which it grows is short and trunkless, and its branches are thickly covered with very sharp stout thorns; whereas the cultivated plum is borne upon a shapely spreading tree, with no thorns and a well-marked trunk, while the fruit itself is much larger, sweeter, and more brightly coloured than the ancestral sloe. But these changes have easily been produced by long tillage and constant selection of the best fruiters through many ages of human agriculture. So, again, if we ask what is the origin of our pretty old-fashioned Scotch roses, the botanists will tell us in like manner that they are double varieties of the wild burnet-rose which grows beside the long tidal lochs of the Scotch Highlands, or clammers over the heathy cliffs of Cumberland and Yorkshire. The wild form of the burnet-rose has only five simple petals, like our own common sweetbriar; but all wild flowers when carefully planted in a rich soil show a tendency to double their petals; and by selecting for many generations those burnet-roses which showed this doubling tendency in the highest degree, our florists have at last succeeded in producing the pretty Scotch roses which may still be found (thank Heaven!) in many quiet cottage gardens, though ousted from fashionable society by the Marshal Niels and Gloires de Dijon of modern scientific horticulturists.

Now, if we push our inquiry a step further back, we shall find that this which is true of cultivated plants in their descent from wild parent stocks, is true also of the parent stocks themselves in their descent from an earlier common ancestor. Each of them has been produced by the selective action of nature, which has favoured certain individuals in the struggle for existence, at the expense of others, and has thus finally resulted in the establishment of new species, having peculiar points of advantage of their own, now wholly distinct from the original species whose descendants they are. Looked at in this manner, every family of plants or animals becomes a sort of puzzle for our ingenuity, as we can to some extent reconstruct the family genealogy by noting in what points the various members resemble one another, and in what points they differ among themselves. To discover the relationship of the various English members of the rose tribe to each other—their varying degrees of cousinship or of remoter community of descent—is the object which we set before ourselves in the present paper.

Perhaps the simplest and earliest type of the rose family now remaining in England is to be found in the little yellow potentillas which grow abundantly in ill-kept fields or by scrubby roadsides. The potentillas are less familiar to us than most others of the rose family, and therefore I am sorry that I am obliged to begin by introducing them first to my reader's notice rather than some other and older acquaintance, like the pear or the hawthorn. But as they form the most central typical specimen of the rose tribe which we now possess in England, it is almost necessary to start our description with them, just as in tracing a family pedigree we must set out from the earliest recognisable ancestor, even though he may be far less eminent and less well known than many of his later descendants. For to a form very much like the potentillas all the rose family trace their descent. The two best known species of potentilla are the goose-weed or silver-weed, and the cinquefoil. Both of them are low creeping herb-like weeds, with simple bright yellow blossoms about the size of a strawberry flower, having each five golden petals, and bearing a number of small dry brown seeds on a long green stalk. At first sight a casual observer would hardly take them for roses at all, but a closer view would show that they resemble in all essential particulars an old-fashioned single yellow rose in miniature. From some such small creeping plants as these all the roses are probably descended. Observe, I do not say that they are the direct offspring of the potentillas, but merely that they are the offspring of some very similar simple form. We ourselves do not derive our origin from the Icelanders; but the Icelanders keep closer than any other existing people to that primitive Teutonic and Scandinavian stock from which we and all the other people of north-western Europe are descended. Just so, the roses do not necessarily derive their origin from the potentillas, but the potentillas keep closer than any other existing rose to that primitive rosaceous stock from which all the other members of the family are descended.¹

The strawberry is one of the more developed plants which has varied least from this early type represented by the cinquefoil and the silver-weed. There is, in fact, one common English potentilla which bears with village children the essentially correct and suggestive name of barren strawberry. This particular potentilla differs from most others of its class in having white petals instead of yellow ones, and in having three leaflets on each stalk instead of five or seven. When it is in flower only it is difficult at first

¹ All the potentillas have a double calyx, which certainly was not the case with the prime ancestor of the roses, or else the whole tribe would still retain it.

sight to distinguish it from the strawberry blossom, though the petals are generally smaller, and the whole flower less widely opened. After blossoming, however, the green bed or receptacle on which the little seeds¹ are seated does not swell out (as in the true strawberry) into a sweet, pulpy, red mass, but remains a mere dry stalk for the tiny bunch of small hard inedible nuts. The barren strawberry, indeed, is really an intermediate stage between the other potentillas and the true eatable strawberry; or, to put it more correctly, the eatable strawberry is a white-flowered potentilla which has acquired the habit of producing a sweet and bright-coloured fruit instead of a few small dry seeds. If we can get to understand the *rationale* of this first and simplest transformation, we shall have a clue by which we may interpret almost all the subsequent modifications of the rose family.

The true strawberry resembles the barren strawberry in every particular except in its fruit. It is a mere slightly divergent variety of that particular species of potentilla, though the great importance of the variety from man's practical point of view causes us to give it a separate name, and has even wrongly induced botanists to place it in a separate genus all by itself. In reality, however, the peculiarity of the fruit is an extremely slight one, very easily brought about. In all other points—in its root, its leaf, its stem, its flower, nay, even its silky hairs—the strawberry all but exactly reproduces the white potentilla. It is evidently nothing more than one of these potentillas with a slight diversity in the way it forms its fruit. To account, therefore, for the strawberry we must first account for the white potentilla from which it springs.

The white potentilla, or barren strawberry, then, is itself a slightly divergent form of the yellow potentillas, such as the cinquefoil. From these it differs in three chief particulars. In the first place, it does not creep, but stands erect; this is due to its mode of life on banks or in open woods, not among grass and hedges as is the case with the straggling cinquefoil. In the second place, it has three leaflets on each stalk instead of five, and this is a slight variation of a sort liable to turn up at any time in any plant, as the number of leaflets is very seldom quite constant. In the third place, it has white petals instead of yellow ones,  this is the most important difference of all. But when we come to consider what is the use and object of flowers, we can easily

¹ Botanically and structurally these seeds, as we always call them, are really fruits; but the point is a purely technical one, with which it is quite unnecessary to bore the reader. I only mention it here to anticipate the sharp eyes of botanical critics.

see why this change too has taken place. Flowers are really devices for producing seed; and in order that the seed should be fertilised, it is necessary that pollen should be carried from one blossom to another either by means of insects or by the wind. All flowers with bright and conspicuous petals are fertilised by insects, which visit them in search of honey or pollen; and the use of the coloured petals is, in fact, to attract the insects and to induce them to fertilise the seeds. Now, yellow seems to have been the original colour of the petals in almost all (if not absolutely in all) families of flowers; and the greater number of potentillas are still yellow. But different flowers are visited and fertilised by different insects, and as some insects like one colour and some another, many blossoms have acquired white or pink or purple petals in the place of yellow ones, to suit the particular taste of their insect friends. The colours of petals are always liable to vary, as we all see in our gardens, where florists can produce at will almost any shade or tint that they choose; and when wild flowers happen to vary in this way, they often get visited by some fresh kind of insect which fertilises their seeds better than the old ones did, and so in time they set up a new variety or a new species. Two of our English potentillas have thus acquired white flowers to suit their proper flies, while one boggy species has developed purple petals to meet the æsthetic requirements of the marsh-land insects. No doubt the white blossoms of the barren strawberry are thus due to some original ‘sport’ or accidental variation, which has been perpetuated and become a fixed habit of the plant because it gave it a better and surer chance of setting its seeds, and so of handing down its peculiarities to future generations.

And now, how did the true strawberry develop from the three-leaved white potentilla? Here the birds came in to play their part, as the bees and flies had done in producing the white blossom. Birds are largely dependent upon fruits and seeds for their livelihood, and so far as they are concerned it does not matter much to them which they eat. But from the point of view of the plant it matters a great deal. For if a bird eats and digests a seed, then the seed can never grow up to be a young plant; and it has so far utterly failed of its true purpose. If, however, the fruit has a hard indigestible seed inside it (or, in the case of the strawberry, outside it), the plant is all the better for the fact, since the seed will not be destroyed by the bird, but will merely be dispersed by it, and so aided in attaining its proper growth. Thus, if certain potentillas happened ever to swell out their seed receptacle into a sweet pulpy mass, and if this mass happened to attract birds, the

potentillas would gain an advantage by their new habit, and would therefore quickly develop into wild strawberries as we now get them. Man carries the same process a step further, for he takes seedlings from the wild strawberries and selects the best from among them, till at last he produces our Hautboys or British Queens. But the difference between the strawberry fruit and the potentilla fruit is to the last a very slight one. Both have a number of little dry seeds seated on a receptacle ; only, in the strawberry the receptacle grows red and succulent, while in the potentilla it remains small and stalk-like. The red colour and sweet juice of the strawberry serve to attract the birds which aid in dispersing the seed, just as the white or yellow petals and the sweet honey of the potentilla blossoms serve to attract the insects which aid in fertilising the flowers. In this way all nature is one continual round of interaction and mutual dependence between the animal and vegetable worlds.

The potentillas and the strawberry plant are all of them mere low creeping or skulking herbs, without woody stems or other permanent branches. But when we get to the development of the brambles or blackberry bushes, we arrive at a higher and more respectable division of the rose family. There are two or three intermediate forms, such as water-avens and herb-bennet—tall, branching, weedy-looking roadside plants—which help us to bridge over the gulf from the one type to the other. Indeed, even the strawberry and the cinquefoil have a short perennial, almost woody stock, close to the ground, from which the annual branches spring ; and in some other English weeds of the rose family the branches themselves are much stiffer and woodier than in these creeping plants. But in the brambles, the trunk and boughs have become really woody, by the deposit of hard material in the cells which make up their substance. Still, even the brambles are yet at heart mere creepers like the cinquefoil. They do not grow erect and upright on their own stems : they trail and skulk and twine in and out among other and taller bushes than themselves. The leaves remain very much of the silver-weed type ; and altogether there is a good deal of the potentilla left in the brambles even now.

However, these woody climbers have certainly some fresh and more developed peculiarities of their own. They are all prickly shrubs, and the origin of their prickles is sufficiently simple. Even the potentillas have usually hairs on their stems ; and these hairs serve to prevent the ants and other honey-thieving insects from running up the stalks and stealing the nectar intended for the fertilising bees and butterflies. In the brambles, hairs of the

same sort have grown thicker and stouter, side by side with the general growth in woodiness of the whole plant; so that they have at last developed into short thorns, which serve to protect the leaves and stem from herbivorous animals. As a rule, the bushes and weeds which grow in waste places are very apt to be thus protected, as we see in the case of gorse, nettles, blackthorn, holly, thistles, and other plants; but the particular nature of the protection varies much from plant to plant. In the brambles it consists of stiff prickly hairs; in the nettles, of stinging hairs; in the gorse, of pointed leaves; and in the thorn-bushes of short, sharp, barren branches.

Another peculiarity of the bramble group is their larger white flowers and their curious granulated fruit. The flowers, of course, are larger and whiter in order to secure the visits of their proper fertilising insects; the fruits are sweet and coloured in order to attract the hedgerow birds. But the nature of the fruit in the raspberry, the blackberry, and the dewberry is quite different from that of the strawberry. Here, instead of the receptacle swelling out and growing red and juicy, it is the separate little seeds themselves that form the eatable part; while the receptacle remains white and inedible, being the 'hull' or stem which we pick out from the hollow thimble-like fruit in the raspberry. Moreover, there are other minor differences in the berries themselves, even within the bramble group; for while the raspberry and cloudberry are red, to suit one set of birds, the blackberry and dewberry are bluish black, to suit another set; and while the little grains hold together as a cup in the raspberry, but separate from the hull, they cling to the hull in the other kinds. Nevertheless, in leaves, flower, and fruit there is a very close fundamental agreement among all the bramble kind and the potentillas. Thus we may say that the brambles form a small minor branch of the rose family, which has first acquired a woody habit and a succulent fruit, and has then split up once more into several smaller but closely allied groups, such as the blackberries, the raspberries, the dewberries, and the stony brambles.

The true roses, represented in England by the dog-rose and sweet-briar, show us a somewhat different development from the original type. They, too, have grown into tall bushes, less scrambling and more erect than the brambles. They have leaves of somewhat the same sort, and prickles which are similarly produced by the hardening of sharp hairs upon the stem. But their flowers and fruit are slightly more specialised--more altered, that is to say, for a particular purpose from the primitive plan. In the first place, the flowers, though still the same in general arrangement,

with five petals and many stamens and carpels (or fruit-pieces), have varied a good deal in detail. The petals are here much larger and of a brilliant pink, and the blossoms are sweet-scented. These peculiarities serve to attract the bees and other large fertilising insects, which thus carry pollen from head to head, and aid in setting the seeds much more securely than the little pilfering flies. Moreover, in all the roses, the outer green cup which covers the blossom in the bud has grown up around the little seeds or fruit-pieces, so that instead of a ball turned outward, as in the strawberry and raspberry, you get, as it were, a bottle turned inward, with the seeds on the inner side. After flowering, as the fruit ripens, this outer cup grows round and red, forming the hip or fruit-case, inside which are to be found the separate little hairy seeds. Birds eat this dry berry, though we do not, and so aid in dispersing the species. The true roses, then, are another branch of the original *potentilla* stock, which have acquired a bushy mode of growth, with a fruit differing in construction from that of the brambles.

We have altogether some five true wild roses in Britain. The commonest is the dog-rose, which everybody knows well; and next comes the almost equally familiar sweet-briar, with its delicately-scented glandular leaves. The burnet-rose is the parent of our cultivated Scotch roses, and the two other native kinds are comparatively rare. Double garden roses are produced from the single five-petalled wild varieties by making the stamens (which are the organs for manufacturing pollen) turn into bright-coloured petals. There is always more or less of a tendency for stamens thus to alter their character; but in a wild state it never comes to any good, because such plants can never set seed, for want of pollen, and so die out in a single generation. Our gardeners, however, carefully select these distorted individuals, and so at length produce the large, handsome, barren flowers with which we are so familiar. The cabbage and moss roses are monstrous forms thus bred from the common wild French roses of the Mediterranean region; the China roses are cultivated abortions from an Asiatic species; and most of the other garden varieties are artificial crosses between these or various other kinds, obtained by fertilising the seed vessels of one bush with pollen taken from the blossoms of another of a different sort. To a botanical eye, double flowers, however large and fine, are never really beautiful, because they lack the order and symmetry which appear so conspicuously in the fine petals, the clustered stamens, and the regular stigmas of the natural form.

From the great central division of the rose family, thus repre-

sented by the potentillas, the strawberry, the brambles, and the true roses, two main younger branches have diverged much more widely in different directions. As often happens, these junior off-shoots have outstripped and surpassed the elder stock in many points of structure and function. The first of the two branches in question is that of the plum tribe; the second is that of the pears and apples. Each presents us with some new and important modifications of the family traits.

Of the plum tribe, our most familiar English examples, wild or cultivated, are the sloe or blackthorn, with its descendant the garden plum; as well as the cherry, the apricot, the peach, the nectarine, and the almond. All these plants differ more or less conspicuously from the members of the central group which we have so far been examining in their tree-like size and larger trunks. But they also differ in another important point: each flower contains only one seed instead of many, and this seed is enclosed in a hard bony covering, which causes the whole plum tribe (except only the almond, of which more anon) to be popularly included under the common title of 'stone-fruits.' In most cases, too, the single seed is further coated with a soft, sweet, succulent pulp, making the whole into an edible fruit. What, now, is the reason for this change? What advantage did the plant derive from this departure from the ordinary type of rose-flower and rose-fruit? To answer this question we must look at one particular instance in detail, and we cannot do better than take that well-known fruit, the cherry, as our prime example of the whole class.

The cherry, like the strawberry, is an eatable fruit. But while in the strawberry we saw that the pulpy part consisted of the swollen stalk or receptacle, in which several small dry seeds were loosely embedded, with the cherry the pulpy part consists of the outer coat of the fruit or seed vessel itself, which has grown soft and juicy instead of remaining hard and dry. In this respect the cherry resembles a single grain from a raspberry; but from the raspberry, again, it differs in the fact that each flower produces only a single solitary one-seeded fruit, instead of producing a number of little fruits, all arranged together in a sort of thimble. In the raspberry flower, when blossoming, you will find in the centre several separate carpels or fruit-pieces; in the cherry you will find only one. The cherry, in fact, may (so far as its fruit is concerned) be likened to a raspberry in which all the carpels or fruit-pieces except one have become aborted. And the reason for the change is simply this: cherry bushes (for in a wild state they are hardly trees) are longer lived plants than the bramble kind, and bear many more blossoms on each bush. Hence

one seed to every blossom is quite as many as they require to keep up the numbers of the species. Moreover, their large and attractive fruits are much more likely to get eaten and so dispersed by birds than the smaller and less succulent berries of the brambles. Furthermore, the cherry has a harder stone around each seed, which is thus more effectually protected against being digested, and the seed itself consists of a comparatively big kernel, richly stored with food-stuffs for the young plant, which thus starts relatively well equipped in the battle of life. For all these reasons the cherries are better off than the brambles, and therefore they can afford to produce fewer seeds to each flower, as well as to make the coverings of these seeds larger and more attractive to birds. Originally, indeed, the cherry had two kernels in each stone, and to this day it retains two little embryo kernels in the blossom, one of which is usually abortive afterwards (though even now you may sometimes find two, as in philipoena almonds); but one seed being ordinarily quite sufficient for all practical purposes, the second one has long since disappeared in the vast majority of cases.

The plum scarcely differs from the cherry in anything important except the colour, size, and shape of the fruit. It is, as we have already noted, a cultivated variety of the blackthorn, in which the bush has become a tree, the thorns have been eradicated, and the fruit has been immensely improved by careful selection. The change wrought in these two wild bushes by human tillage shows, indeed, how great is the extent to which any type of plant can be altered by circumstances in a very short time. The apricot is yet another variety of the same small group, long subjected to human cultivation in the East.

Peaches and nectarines differ from apricots mainly in their stones, which are wrinkled instead of being smooth; but otherwise they do not seriously diverge from the other members of the plum tribe. There is one species of nectarine, however, which has undergone a very curious change, and that is the almond. Different as they appear at first sight, the almond must really be regarded as a very slightly altered variety of nectarine. Its outer shell or husk represents the pulpy part of the nectarine fruit; and indeed, if you cut in two a young unripe almond and a young unripe nectarine, you will find that they resemble one another very closely. But as they ripen the outer coat of the nectarine grows juicier, while that of the almond grows stringier and coarser, till at last the one becomes what we commonly call a fruit, while the other becomes what we commonly call a nut. Here again, the reason for the change is not difficult to divine. Some seeds succeed best by making themselves attractive and trusting to birds

for their dispersion; others succeed best by adopting the tactics of concealment, by dressing themselves in green when on the tree, and in brown when on the ground, and by seeking rather to evade than to invite the attention of the animal world. Those seed vessels which aim at the first plan we know as fruits; those which aim rather at the second we know as nuts. The almond is just a nectarine which has gone back to the nut-producing habit. The cases are nearly analogous to those of the strawberry and the potentilla, only the strawberry is a fruit developed from a dry seed, whereas the almond is a dry seed developed from a fruit. To some extent this may be regarded as a case of retrogressive evolution or degeneration.

The second great divergent branch of the rose family—that of the pears and apples—has proceeded towards much the same end as the plums, but in a strikingly different manner. The apple kind have grown into trees, and have produced fruits. Instead, however, of the seed vessel itself becoming soft and succulent, the calyx or outer flower covering of the petals has covered up the carpels or young seed vessels even in the blossom, and has then swollen out into a sort of stalk-like fruit. The case, indeed, is again not unlike that of the strawberry, only that here the stalk has enlarged outward round the flower and enclosed the seeds, instead of simply swelling into a boss and embedding them. In the hip of the true roses we get some foreshadowing of this plan, except that in the roses the seeds still remained separate and free inside the swollen stalk, whereas in the pear and apple the entire fruit grows into a single solid mass. Here, also, as before, we can trace a gradual development from the bushy to the tree-like form.

The common hawthorn of our hedges shows us, perhaps, the simplest stage in the evolution of the apple tribe. It grows only into a tall bush, not unlike that of the blackthorn, and similarly armed with stout spines, which are really short sharp branches, not mere prickly hairs, as in the case of the brambles. Occasionally, however, some of the hawthorns develop into real trees, with a single stumpy trunk, though they never grow to more than mere small spreading specimens of the arboreal type, quite unlike the very tall and stately pear-tree. The flowers of the hawthorn—may-blossom, as we generally call them—are still essentially of the rose type; but, instead of having a single embryo seed and simple fruit in the centre, they have a compound fruit, enclosing many seeds, and all embedded in the thick fleshy calyx or flower-cap. As the haw ripens the flower cup outside grows redder and juicier, and the seed pieces at the same time become hard and

bony. For it is a general principle of all edible fruits that, while they are young and the seeds are unripe, they remain green and sour, because then they could only be losers if eaten by birds; but as the seeds ripen and become fit to germinate, the pulp grows soft and sweet, and the skin assumes its bright hue, because then the birds will be of service to it by diffusing the mature seeds. How largely birds assist in thus dispersing plants has very lately been proved in Australia, where a new and troublesome weed has rapidly overrun the whole country, because the fruit-eaters are very fond of it, and scatter its seeds broadcast over the length and breadth of the land.

The common medlar is nothing more than a hawthorn with a very big overgrown haw. In the wild state it bristles with hard thorns, which are wanting to the cultivated form, and its flower almost exactly resembles that of the may. The fruit, however, only becomes edible after it begins to decay, and the bony covering of the seeds is remarkably hard. It seems probable that the medlar, originally a native of southern Europe, is largely dispersed, not by birds, but by mice, rats, and other small quadrupeds. The colour is not particularly attractive, nor is the fruit particularly tempting while it remains upon the bush; but when it falls upon the ground and begins to rot, it may easily be eaten by rodents or pigs, and thus doubtless it procures the dispersion of its seeds under conditions highly favourable to their proper growth and success in life.

The little Siberian crabs, largely cultivated for their fruit in America, and sometimes found in English shrubberies as well, give us one of the earliest and simplest forms of the real apple group. In some respects, indeed, the apples are even simpler than the hawthorn, because their seeds or pips are not enclosed in bony cases, but only in those rather tough leathery coverings which form what we call the core. The haw of the hawthorn may be regarded as a very small crab-apple, in which the walls of the seed cells have become very hard and stony; or the crab may be regarded as a rather large haw, in which the cell walls still remain only thinly cartilaginous. The flowers of all the group are practically identical, except in size, and the only real difference of structure between them is in the degree of hardness attained by the seed covers. The crabs, the apples, and the pears, however, all grow into tallish trees, and so have no need for thorns or prickles, because they are not exposed to the attacks of herbivorous animals. Ordinary orchard apples are, of course, merely cultivated varieties of the common wild crabs. In shape the apple-tree is always spreading, like an arboreal hawthorn, only on a larger scale.

The pear-tree differs from it in two or three small points, of which the chief are its taller and more pyramidal form, and the curious tapering outline of the fruit. Nevertheless, pear-trees may be found of every size and type, especially in the wild state, from a mere straggling bush, no bigger than a hawthorn, to a handsome towering trunk, not unlike an elm or an alder.

The quince is another form of apple very little removed from its congeners except in the fruit. More different in external appearance is the mountain-ash or rowan-tree, which few people would take at first sight for a rose at all. Nevertheless, its flowers exactly resemble apple blossom, and its pretty red berries are only small crabs, dwarfed, no doubt, by its love for mountain heights and bleak, windy situations, and clustered closely together into large drooping bundles. For the same reason, perhaps, its leaves have been split up into numerous small leaflets, which causes it to have been popularly regarded as a sort of ash. In the extreme North, the rowan shrinks to the condition of a stunted shrub; but in deep, rich soils and warmer situations it rises into a pretty and graceful tree. The berries are eagerly eaten by birds, for whose attraction most probably they have developed their beautiful scarlet colour.

So far, all the members of the rose family with which we have dealt have exhibited a progressive advance upon the common simple type, whose embodiment we found in the little wayside potentillas. Their flowers, their fruits, their stems, their branches, have all shown a regular and steady improvement, a constant increase in adaptation to the visits of insects or birds, and to the necessities for defence and protection. I should be giving a false conception of evolution in the roses, however, if I did not briefly illustrate the opposite fact of retrogressive development or degeneration which is found in some members of the class; and though these members are therefore almost necessarily less familiar to us, because their flowers and fruits are inconspicuous, while their stems are for the most part mere trailing creepers, I must find room to say a few words about two or three of the most noteworthy cases, in order to complete our hasty review of the commonest rosaceous tribes. For, as we all know, development is not always all upward. Among plants and animals there are usually some which fall behind in the race, and which manage nevertheless to eke out a livelihood for themselves in some less honourable and distinguished position than their ancestors. About these black sheep of the rose family I must finally say a few words.

In order to get at them, we must go back once more to that simple central group of roses which includes the potentillas and

the strawberry. These plants, as we saw, are mostly small trailers or creepers among grass or on banks; and they have little yellow or white blossoms, fertilised by the aid of insects. In most cases their flowers, though small, are distinct enough to attract attention in solitary arrangement. There are some species of this group, however, in which the flowers have become very much dwarfed, so that by themselves they would be quite too tiny to allure the eyes of bees or butterflies. This is the case among the meadow-sweets, to which branch also the spiræas of our gardens and conservatories belong. Our common English meadow-sweet has close trusses of numerous small whitish or cream-coloured flowers, thickly clustered together in dense bunches at the end of the stems; and in this way, as well as by their powerful perfume, the tiny blossoms, too minute to attract attention separately, are able to secure the desired attentions of any passing insect. In their case, as elsewhere, union is strength. The foreign spiræas cultivated in our hothouses have even smaller separate flowers, but gathered into pretty, spiky antler-like branches, which contrast admirably with the dark green of the foliage, and so attain the requisite degree of conspicuousness. This habit of clustering the blossoms which are individually dwarfed and stunted may be looked upon as the first stage of degradation in the roses. The seeds of the meadow-sweet are very minute, dry, and inedible. They show no special adaptation to any particular mode of advanced dispersion, but trust merely to chance as they drop from the dry capsule upon the ground beneath.

A far deeper stage of degradation is exhibited by the little salad-burnet of our meadows, which has lost the bright petals of its flowers altogether, and has taken to the wasteful and degenerate habit of fertilisation by means of the wind. We can understand the salad-burnet better if we look first at common agrimony, another little field weed about a foot high, with which most country people are familiar; for, though agrimony is not itself an example of degradation, its arrangement leads us on gradually to the lower types. It has a number of small yellow flowers like those of the cinquefoil; only, instead of standing singly on separate flower stalks, they are all arranged together on a common terminal spike, in the same way as in a hyacinth or a gladiolus. Now, agrimony is fertilised by insects, and therefore, like most other small field roses, it has conspicuous yellow petals to attract its winged allies. But the salad-burnet, starting from a somewhat similar form, has undergone a good deal of degradation in adapting itself to wind-fertilisation. It has a long spike of flowers, like the agrimony; but these flowers are very small, and are closely crowded together

into a sort of little mophead at the end of the stem. They have lost their petals, because these were no longer needed to allure bees or butterflies, and they retain only the green calyx or flower-cup, so that the whole spike looks merely a bit of greenish vegetation, and would never be taken for a blossoming head by any save a botanical eye. The stamens hang out on long thread-like stems from the cup, so that the wind may catch the pollen and waft it to a neighbouring head; while the pistils which it is to fertilise have their sensitive surface divided into numerous little plumes or brushes, so as readily to catch any stray pollen grain which may happen to pass their way. Moreover, in each head, all the upper flowers have pistile and embryo seed vessels only, without any stamens; while all the lower flowers have stamens and pollen bags only, without any pistils. This sort of division of labour, together with the same arrangement of seed-bearing blossoms above and pollen-bearing blossoms below, is very common among wind-fertilised plants, and for a very good reason. If the stamens and pistils were enclosed in a single flower they would fertilise themselves, and so lose all the benefit which plants derive from a cross, with its consequent infusion of fresh blood. If, again, the stamens were above and the pistils below, the pollen from the stamens would fall upon and impregnate the pistils, thus fertilising each blossom from others on the same plant—a plan which is hardly better than that of self-fertilisation. But when the stamens are below and the pistils above, then each flower must necessarily be fertilised by pollen from another plant, which ensures in the highest degree the benefits to be derived from a cross.

Thus we see that the salad-burnet has adapted itself perfectly to its new mode of life. Yet that adaptation is itself of the nature of a degradation, because it is a lapse from a higher to a lower grade of organisation—it is like a civilised man taking to a Robinson Crusoe existence, and dressing in fresh skins. Indeed, so largely has the salad-burnet lost the distinctive features of its relatives, the true roses, that no one but a skilled botanist would ever have guessed it to be a rose at all. In outer appearance it is much more like the little flat grassy plantains, which grow as weeds by every roadside; and it is only a minute consideration of its structure and analogies which can lead us to recognise it as really and essentially a very degenerate and inconspicuous rose. Yet its ancestors must once have been true roses, for all that, with coloured petals, and all the rosaceous characteristics, since it still retains many traces of its old habits even in its modern degraded form.

We have in England another common weed, very like the

salad-burnet, and popularly known as stanch-wound, or great-burnet, whose history is quite as interesting as that of its neighbour. The stanch-wound is really a salad-burnet which has again lost its habit of depending upon the wind for fertilisation, and has reverted to the earlier insect-attracting tactics of the race. As it had already lost its petals, however, it could not easily replace them, so it has acquired a coloured calyx or flower-cup instead, which answers exactly the same purpose. In other words, having no petals, it has been obliged to pour the purple pigment with which it allures its butterfly friends into the part answering to the green covering of the salad-burnet. It has a head of small coloured blossoms, extremely like those of the sister species in many respects, only purple instead of green. Moreover, to suit its new habits, it has its cup much more tubular than that of the salad-burnet ; its stamens do not hang out to the wind, but are enclosed within the tube ; and the pistil has its sensitive surface shortened into a little sticky knob instead of being split up into a number of long fringes or plumes. All these peculiarities of course depend upon its return from the new and bad habit of wind-fertilisation to the older and more economical plan of getting the pollen carried from head to head by bees or butterflies. The two flowers grow also exactly where we should expect them to do. The salad-burnet loves dry and wind-swept pastures or rocky hillsides, where it has free elbow-room to shed its pollen to the breeze ; the stanch-wound takes rather to moist and rich meadows, where many insects are always to be found flitting about from blossom to blossom of the honey-bearing daisies or the sweet-scented clover.

Perhaps it may be asked, How do I know that the salad-burnet is not descended from the stanch-wound, rather than the stanch-wound from the salad-burnet ? At first sight this might seem the simpler explanation of the facts, but I merely mention it to show briefly what are the sort of grounds on which such questions must be decided. The stanch-wound is certainly a later development than the salad-burnet, and for this reason : It has only four stamens, while the parent plant has several, like all the other roses. Now, it would be almost impossible for the flower first to lose the numerous stamens of the ordinary rose type, and then to regain them anew as occasion demanded. It is easy enough to lose any part or organ, but it is a very different thing to develop it over again. Thus the great-burnet, having once lost its petals, has never recovered them, but has been obliged to colour its calyx instead. It is much more natural, therefore, to suppose that the stanch-wound, with its few stamens and its clumsy device of a coloured calyx instead of petals, is descended from the salad-

burnet, than that the pedigree should run the other way; and there are many minor considerations which tend in the same direction. Most correctly of all, we ought perhaps to say that the one form is probably a descendant of ancestors more or less like the other, but that it has lost its ancestors' acquired habits of wind-fertilisation, and reverted to the older methods of the whole tribe. Still, it has not been able to replace the lost petals.

I ought likewise to add that there are yet other roses even more degenerate than the burnets, such as the little creeping parsley-piert, a mere low moss-like plant, clinging in the crannies of limestone rocks or growing on the top of earthy walls, with tiny green petal-less flowers, so small that they can hardly be distinguished with the naked eye. These, however, I cannot now find space to describe at length; and, indeed, they are of little interest to anybody save the professional botanist. But I must just take room to mention that if I had employed exotic examples as well as the familiar English ones, I might have traced the lines of descent in some cases far more fully. It is perhaps better, however, to confine our attention to fairly well-known plants, whose peculiarities we can all carry easily in our mind's eye, rather than to overload the question with technical details about unknown or unfamiliar species, whose names convey no notion at all to an English reader. When we consider, too, that the roses form only one family out of the ninety families of flowering plants to be found in England alone, it will be clear that such a genealogy as that which I have here endeavoured roughly to sketch out is but one among many interesting plant pedigrees which might be easily constructed on evolutionary principles. Indeed, the roses are a comparatively small group by the side of many others, such as the pea-flowers, the carrot tribe, and the dead-nettles. Thus, we have in England only forty-five species of roses, as against over two hundred species of the daisy family. Nevertheless, I have chosen the rose tribe as the best example of a genealogical study of plants, because most probably a larger number of roses are known to unbotanical readers than is the case with any other similar division of the vegetable world.

GRANT ALLEN.

Rambles round Harrow.

II.

If we leave Harrow station and continue our journey past Harrow Weald, we shall have Belmont on the right, and skirt the delightful grounds of Bentley Priory, before alluded to ; and we shall arrive, after a walk of about three miles, on the London high road again, with its low long country inns, and wooden drinking troughs on tressels, where at any time during a summer's day picturesque groups of cattle or waggon horses may be seen resting from their dusty travel and slaking their thirst in the water which is supplied by a pump at one end of the little reservoir. And now we are at one extremity of Bushey, which was engraved in the last chapter.

Bushey was called *Bisset* in Domesday Book, and it was granted to Geoffrey de Magnaville by the Conqueror. It seems to have had many possessors in succession, and to have occasionally reverted to the Crown. At one time it was held by Edmond de Woodstock, Earl of Kent, who was beheaded in the reign of Edward III. by the influence of Queen Isabella and Mortimer. A terrible fate, however, met him in return, for he was arrested by Edward III. in person at Nottingham Castle, as he was in the council chamber ; the entrance to this, in the wonderful rock, is still pointed out. But John Britton in one of his works gives a shocking list of the ill-starred owners of Bushey Manor, and a few of their immediate connections. The Duke of Exeter and Richard II., sons of the lady of the manor, were both put to death in Henry IV.'s reign, and Thomas de Holland, lord of the manor, was murdered the same year. Neville, Earl of Salisbury, whose wife was lady of Bushey Manor, was beheaded at Wakefield ; and so Britton runs through the melancholy list, until he closes with Margaret Plantagenet, of whose innocence there has for ages been no doubt.

The church stands very picturesquely by the roadside, and is only not illustrated here from lack of space. There is a noble elm before it, and a pond, and the combination of the group is very striking. This church is built of flint and rubble work—a style of masonry that seems to be almost perpetual, and it is in excellent preservation. In the floor of the chancel is a marble slab inscribed to 'The Right Honourable Lady Mary Howard, wife of

Gilbert, Lord Barnard, and daughter of Morgan Randyll, Esq.; and in the churchyard is a monument to Mrs. Elizabeth Fuller, of Watford Place, who founded the free school at Watford town, and who, as we learn, was thrice married and outlived her third husband. The pointed arch that opens from the tower into the nave of the church is very well proportioned. It may be remarked that if, instead of pursuing our journey, we turn to the right, we shall have a charming walk past Caldicot Hill and the reservoir, and as far as Elstree, from which another turn towards the south will bring us to Stanmore and Edgeware, and from there to the Roman road which leads us to London.

All this district is believed to abound in Roman antiquities, even to the present day. There can be little doubt that Brockley Hill is the site of the ancient Sulonica. Britton hesitates to pronounce on this with certainty, but now it is generally accepted as true. Beautiful remains have been found of various Roman periods, and some bronzes of exquisite beauty that were discovered at the end of the last century are carefully preserved yet. From Brockley to Pennywell the principal part of the city seems to have lain, and the relics that from time to time have appeared gave rise to the distich :—

No heart can see nor tongue can tell
What lies from Brockley to Pennywell.

How soon after the exotic civilisation of the Romans the country relapsed into its former condition may be learned from the pages of Matthew Paris, in his life of the twelfth Abbot of St. Albans, wherein he describes the woods between London and St. Albans as almost impenetrable, and so infested by robbers and beasts of prey—which of course can only mean wolves—that the pilgrims who travelled along the Roman road were exposed to considerable danger. This dreary tract was called the ‘Forest of Middlesex’ in after years. In the twelfth century Fitz Stephen says that ‘beyond the suburbs of the city, which afford cornfields, pastures, and delightful meadows, an immense forest extends itself, beautified with woods and groves, and full of the lairs and coverts of beasts and game—stags, bucks, boars, and wild bulls.’ In all this forest the citizens had the right of free warren, but in the year 1218 it was disforested. Perhaps, if we could see some parts of Hampstead Heath as it was at the beginning of the last century, we should have a slight idea of ‘Middlesex Forest.’ All about here the land rises and falls, and it may have afforded much cover for the larger game. But we learn from Domesday Book that there were clearings and farmsteads in these thickets, and some few oases in the

wilderness, which was given to the Earl of Moreton, the half-brother of the Conqueror. Near here, in a villa called 'The Grove,' Aaron Capadoce, a Jew, died in 1782, at the very advanced age of 105. Stanmore Parva adjoins this parish, and it is often called 'Whitchurch.' In this parish was the celebrated palace of Canons, once the residence of the Duke of Chandos. 'It was,' says Britton, 'the wonder of the existing age for its splendour, and was in an equal degree the wonder of the age succeeding, on account of its abrupt declension and premature ruin.' Three architects were employed—Gibbs, James, and Sheppard. Traditions yet linger about the magnificence of the pile, but one item that is preserved suffices to indicate what it must have been. The steps of the principal staircase were, we are assured by the ever accurate Britton, in one solid block of marble, and each twenty-two feet in length. The palace was built for posterity, as the walls were twelve feet in thickness below and nine above. The magnificence of the Duke's establishment was in keeping with the house, and he even affected the style of a sovereign prince; imitated a quondam royal custom of dining in public, with flourishes of music to announce the change of dishes, and when he went to chapel was attended by a military guard. The total cost is said to have exceeded a quarter of a million sterling; and when we consider that building of all kinds has nearly doubled in the last twenty or twenty-five years, we can form some idea of the magnificence of the pile. Even decorations are more costly than when Canons was built. Pope wrote a satire upon it, which caused the Duke much pain. It appears in his Moral Essays, Epistle IV. :—

At Timon's villa let us pass a day,
 Where all cry out, 'What sums are thrown away !'
 So proud, so grand ; of that stupendous air,
 Soft and agreeable come never there.
 Greatness with Timon dwells in such a draught
 As brings all Brobdingnag before your thought.
 To compass this his building is a town,
 His pond an ocean, his parterre a down.
 Who but must laugh the master when he sees,
 A puny insect shivering at a breeze !
 Lo, what huge heaps of littleness around !
 The whole a labour'd quarry above ground.

The allusion to his parterre being like a down doubtless arose from the circumstance that there was no wall or fence to intercept the view, but all was divided by a light iron railing. The chapel walls and ceiling were decorated with saints by Verrio and Laguerre, and hence Pope says again :—

And now the chapel's silver bell you hear,
 That summons you to all the pride of prayer ;
 Light quirks of music, broken and uneven,
 Make the soul dance upon a jig to heaven
 On painted ceilings you devoutly stare,
 Where sprawl the saints of Verrio or Laguerre ;
 Or gilded clouds in fair expansion lie,
 And bring all Paradise before your eye.
 To rest, the cushion and soft Dean invite,
 Who never mentions hell to ears polite.

Pope regretted that he ever wrote this, and even went so far as to say that he never intended it for Canons :

Who to the Dean and silver bell can swear,
 And sees at Canons what was never there.

But nobody credited him. The Duke of Chandos was a most amiable and charitable man, and Pope saw his mistake, but all he could say or do was of no avail with the public. It was commonly supposed that Pope received a thousand pounds from the Duke as a tribute to his literary worth, though this is not certain. At any rate, Pope wrote an exculpatory letter, which the Duke answered very magnanimously, though he said that to have ridiculed his buildings might have been indifferent in another man ; but from Pope, after the mutual kindly feelings that had existed between them, it was less excusable. The successor to the Duke made several attempts to sell the place, but not succeeding, he took it down and sold the materials at auction in 1747. The great staircase was purchased by Lord Chesterfield for his house at Mayfair, and Mr. Hallet, a cabinet-maker, purchased the site and built a very excellent villa where the old mansion stood. One entrance to this is from Edgware, and another, about a mile distant, is from Stanmore. Edgware is a long straggling dull village, eight miles from London, on the Edgware road, which commences at the west end of Oxford Street, and leads past Maida Vale, St. John's Wood, and Hendon. The ancient way of spelling it was *Eggeswere*, and this continued to be the received method until the reign of Henry VIII., when the present orthography was substituted. Near Edgware is a small piece of land called Piper's Green, which derived its name from a curious custom mentioned by Blackstone. The lord of the manor had to provide either a piper or some other kind of musician to amuse his tenants when engaged on his service. The inhabitants were apparently kept well up to the mark in old times. Thus we read that in 1551 two men were fined for playing cards and tables ; and a few years later a man was fined for selling his ale at a price the court considered too high, though to modern ears three half-pints for a penny does not seem to indicate any

grave offence. In old times a hundred acres of land at Edgeware were held on the service of supplying a pair of gilt spurs, and fifty acres were rented for a pound of cummin.

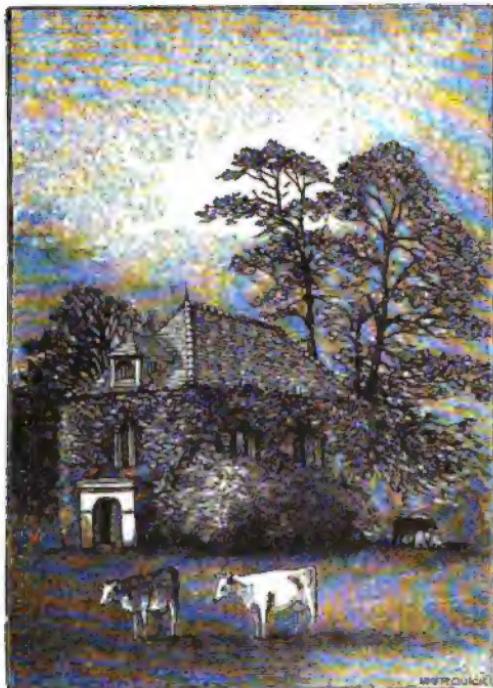
A little to the west of these parts is Harrow Weald, and it retains its name still from its woody character, *weald* in Saxon signifying *wood*. *Wald* of course is the present German word for the same. The land all about here is undulating, and at the northern extremity of the weald is a spot of ground so much higher than the other parts, that it was at one time a landmark for mariners who approached England from the German Ocean; and until very recently there were ancient gnarled trees to be seen, that formed part of the great Middlesex forest. There is also an ancient earthwork here called Grimes's Dike, of which



Fields near Oxhey.

little is known, but it is of great antiquity. Here there is also a very comfortable and picturesque farmhouse, with three gables and mullioned windows; quite a model of an old English home-stead, with barns, and a Dutch oven. If we continue our journey to the northward, we shall arrive at Watford Heath, and at the end of this a narrow stile leads us into a considerable district to which the name of Oxhey seems to apply. There is Oxhey Lane, Oxhey Place, Oxhey Lodge, and Oxhey Hall. All this district is singularly wild-looking for any locality so near the metropolis, and the new fir plantations almost seem to suggest the idea of a place that was being for the first time enclosed. I was surprised even to see a covey of partridges; but whether that was their home, or if they had sought it as a refuge from the Purdys and Westley-Richardses,

whose ‘merits’ they did not hold in as much estimation as the patentees of such weapons would seem to do, I cannot say. This district may be said to commence at Burnt Oak, just outside the earthwork alluded to, and to extend for two miles into Hertfordshire; and at the extreme end is Oxhey Hall, which was formerly the property of the Right Hon. W. H. Smith, a gentleman to whom anyone within a hundred miles of Charing Cross is indebted for the luxury of a London paper at breakfast time. But besides the literary contributor who has done so much to make the early part



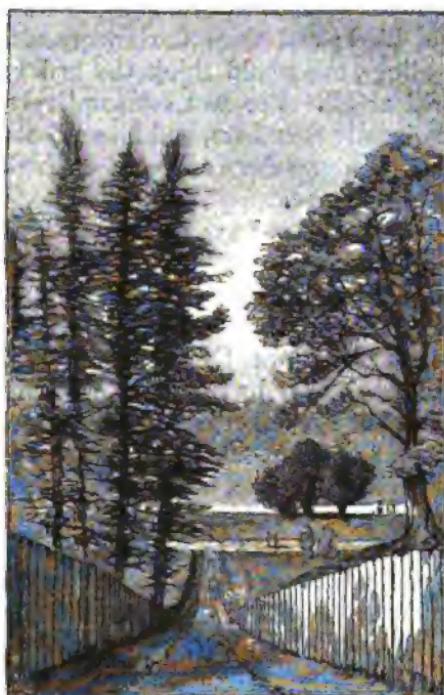
Oxhey Chapel.

of the day enjoyable, Oxhey can boast of another benefactor to the breakfast table who may fairly divide the honours with Mr. Smith. Oxhey Hall was purchased by Mr. Blackwell, of the great firm of Crosse and Blackwell; and though he only occasionally resides there, it is still his property.

The main line of the London and North-Western Railway goes through Oxhey, and it is crossed by several bridges. There are both cuttings and embankments to adapt it to the irregular surface, and shortly after leaving this part to go northwards is the celebrated Watford Tunnel, which extends for more than a mile in

length. Oxhey is drained by several small brooks, which are formed in the hollows and flow into the Colne.

The church is a rather curious building embedded in ivy, and has no very particular architectural character. Services are not held regularly there, nor is it necessary that they should be. The living is vested in the Right Hon. T. H. Sotheron-Escourt. It stands in the park of Oxhey Hall before alluded to, and it has been sometimes admired for its picturesqueness. Its situation is certainly very beautiful, and the trees round it are very majestic.



The Colne.

It is said that some of the splendid tree studies that figure in J. D. Harding's book, which is now so rare, were from examples at Oxhey, and it almost seemed to me as if one or two could be identified; but he left no references behind him by which to recognise the locality, and other places besides Oxhey lay claim to some, at any rate, of the matchless crayon drawings.

In the road shown at Oxhey that goes down a steep hill, we see our old friend the river Colne again, and very beautiful and interesting it is here. In June and July there are banks where we can find the sand-martens in great numbers feeding, and often have I been interested in noticing their curious movements. If we

are still for a little, and keep at a short distance away, we shall see them in little black knots, apparently feeding on minute insects, and all at once a group will rise with a scream and fly to another bank, or else skim the water and pick up the *ephemeræ* that have in an ill-starred moment touched the glassy surface and run their little race. Sometimes, as if by a sudden impulse, two or three will rise together from different parts of the gathering, and fly away as if for the pleasure of motion, and then return to the same spot, occupying almost their old places. Sometimes, again, the whole of the denizens will leave without notice, and be succeeded by other birds of the same kind ; and from the energy with which they commence proceedings, one would think the bed had never been reaped or gathered at all. The now comparatively rare bird the kingfisher is occasionally seen here, and literally flashes over the waters of the Colne. Perhaps there are only two English birds that have equally bright plumage.

I do not know if there is a herony in the neighbourhood, but herons are not at all uncommon on the Colne waters, and I noticed a curious habit with them. Sometimes they will poise their long heavy beaks in the air for a considerable time, as if to escape for a little from the beverage, but still their eyes are all there, for they will suddenly seize a fish as if by lightning. I had some further notes on this subject, but I find them anticipated in a charming book on ‘Wild Life in a Southern County.’ Although the night seems the heron’s principal feeding time, he frequently fishes in the day. Generally his long neck enables him to see danger, but not always. Several times I have come right on a heron, when the banks of the brook were high and the bushes thick, before he has seen me, so as to be for the moment within five yards. His clumsy terror is quite ludicrous : try how he will, he cannot fly fast at starting ; he requires fifty yards to get properly under weigh. What a contrast to the swift snipe, that darts off at thirty miles an hour from under your feet ! The long hanging legs, the outstretched neck, the wide wings and body, seem to offer a mark which no one could possibly miss ; yet with an ordinary gun and snipe shot I have seen a heron get away safely like this more than once. You can hear the shot rattle against him, and he utters a strange, harsh, screeching ‘quaack,’ and works his wings in mortal fright ; but presently he gets half-way up to the clouds, and sails away in calm security.

At Watford is the noble institution known as the London Orphan Asylum. It was instituted in the year 1813, for orphan boys and girls of respectable parentage, who were left in the world unprovided for. At the age of fifteen they leave their foster-home, and are provided with situations. Some go out as clerks in



Watford Church.

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offices or warehouses, or in retail shops, and the girls are generally sought after for pupil-teachers in schools, or as governesses in private families. Children are admitted between the ages of seven and eleven, and are elected. The total expenditure of the institution is 15,000*l.* annually, and it is pleasant to be able to say that the chapel, which is an excellent one, is the gift of an old pupil : it was built at an expense of 5,000*l.* Near this place also is the Commercial Travellers' School, a very well designed block of buildings, and liberally supported by the class for whom it was designed—a class that I have met with now for many years in wanderings that have extended over every English county, and a class from whom I never received anything else than kindness and civility, and to whom I am indebted for much and valuable information. Watford, which formerly belonged to the Abbey of St. Albans, came into possession of Lord Chancellor Egerton, Baron Ellesmere, in whose family it remained for some generations. The celebrated Duke of Bridgewater was a representative during the last century, and to his lot it fell to engage the services of Brindley, the water engineer, to construct the Bridgewater canal—Brindley, who has had no equal, perhaps hardly a second, recorded in history. In 1760, when money had to be raised for the canal, Watford was sold to the family of the Earl of Essex, and with them it has remained till now. Watford Church is a fine roomy building, that does not seem to have suffered very severely from the hands of the restorer. It is dedicated to the Virgin Mary, and has the usual aisles, nave, chancel, and tower ; but its great glory is the chantry chapel of the Morison family of Cashiobury, now pertaining to the Essex family. In beauty and dignity it almost may be said to rank with the celebrated Beauchamp Chapel at Warwick. There are two very noble monuments by Nicholas Stone, and one even in Queen Elizabeth's time cost the enormous sum of 260*l.*, which would represent three or four thousand pounds of our money. The upper and central parts of this splendid tomb consist of a pediment and canopy, resting on Corinthian columns, and underneath is Sir Charles Morison finely sculptured in white marble. He is represented in armour, with one elbow on a cushion and the other on his sword. His beard is of the Vandyck fashion, and the whole figure is most characteristic of the Elizabethan period. At each end, under a canopy of flowing drapery, is a kneeling figure : one represents a son and the other a daughter of Sir Charles. There is a long Latin inscription, which is characteristic of the period, and which enlarge, as was the custom, upon the many virtues of the deceased. This tomb was erected by Sir Charles Morison, his son, who in his turn has another and even more beautiful and costly monument.

It is similar in general appearance to the former one, but the knight and his lady are sculptured with greater skill. The features of Lady Morison are particularly pleasing. Walpole possessed Nicholas Stone's pocket-book, and he informs us that the cost of this monument was four hundred pounds. There is a curious entry after quoting the price of the elder Baronet's tomb. In addition to the 260*l.* he says, 'besides four pieces given me to drink.' There are other monuments in this interesting chapel well worthy of notice. There is an alabaster figure of Lady Bridget, Countess Dowager of Bedford, who died in 1600 at the age of seventy-five. The westernmost of the tombs supports the figure of 'The Right Honourable Lady Dame Elizabeth Russell, daughter and sole heir of Henrie Long of Shingay in Cambridgeshire, and wife of William, Lord Russell, of Thornhaugh, son of Francis, Earl of Bedford.' The costume of this figure is very interesting, and at one time it was coloured. There are many other memorials here. One to 'The Honourable John Forbes, second son of George, third Earl of Granard, admiral of the fleet and general of marines ;' and another to 'the Right Honourable Mary Forbes, daughter of William, third Earl of Essex, by the Lady Jane Hyde, daughter of Henry, fourth Earl of Clarendon ;' and on the floor are some interesting brasses to servants of the Morison family. These old monuments are always impressive, and contrast strangely with the pseudo-classic of a later age. Roubiliac or Rysbrach might have appealed, as they did, to the sympathies of the stilted, artificial Chesterfield ; but how weak their monuments are if compared with the effigies in so many secluded country churches. There is no pomp of power about these ; the lawyer is not addressing an imaginary court, or the general inciting a supposed army, but each lies on his tomb, in his habit as he lived. There are in this interesting church many other memorials that are well worth examining. Formerly the interior was much more picturesque than now, and quaint galleries and black oak pews crowded it pleasantly ; but though the renovator has not swept every trace of antiquity away, he has contrived to make its appearance somewhat more bald than it once was.

The Morisons and the Capels seem to have enjoyed this fine chantry in succession, but the Capels, of whom the present Earl of Essex is the representative, are the inheritors of the Morison property, and the magnificent seat of Cashiobury passed to the present owner through a marriage between Elizabeth Morison and Arthur, Lord Capel, of Hadham. The Capels were for long seated at Stoke Nayland, in Suffolk, on Capel Manor, but in 1503 Sir William Capel had acquired considerable wealth in trade, and became Lord Mayor of London. His wealth was sufficient to

attract the cupidity of Henry VII. and his servile tools, Empson and Dudley, and he was mulcted in the sum of 2,000*l.* by the process of ready reckoning for which that monarch was celebrated. The system of 'Benevolences' was reintroduced in this reign, and 'a dilemma of his favourite minister, which received the name of Morton's fork, extracted gifts for the exchequer from men who lived handsomely on the ground that their wealth was manifest, and from those who lived plainly on the score that their parsimony had made them wealthy.' When Capel refused to pay another sum of 2,000*l.*, he was imprisoned in the Tower until the death of Henry VII. His son accompanied Henry VIII. to France, and appears to have been very skilful in deeds of arms. Cashiobury Park, of which some notice will appear later on, has always been in the hands of the family till the present day. There is one singular epitaph on a tablet of white marble on the south wall of the nave, which was written by Dr. Johnson.

In the Vault below are deposited the Remains of
 JANE BELL, Wife of JOHN BELL, Esq.,
 Who, in the fifty-third year of her Age,
 Surrounded him with many worldly Blessings,
 Heard, with Fortitude and Composure truly great,
 The horrible Malady which had for some time begun to afflict her,
 Pronounced Incurable ;
 And for more than three years
 Endured with patience, and concealed with Decency,
 The daily tortures of gradual death ;
 Continued to divide the Hours not allotted to Devotion
 Between the Cares of her Family and the Converse of her Friends ;
 Rewarded the Attendance of Duty,
 And acknowledged the Offices of Affection ;
 And while she endeavoured to alleviate, by Cheerfulness,
 Her Husband's Sufferings and Sorrows,
 Encreased them by her Gratitude for his Care . . .
 And her Solicitude for his Quiet.
 To the Memory of these Virtues,
 More highly honoured as more familiarly known,
 This Monument is erected by
 JOHN BELL.

Watford is now a favourite resort for London men of business who are not tied very rigidly to hours, and who can, in their half-hour's ride, read the morning's news. It lies literally embedded in ancestral parks, through which a public road is always allowed, and it is one of the most charming districts within easy reach of the Metropolis. Much taste is displayed in many of the residences, and some, like Oaklands and others on the Hempstead Road, are surrounded with grounds of great beauty.

ALFRED RIMMER.

(To be continued.)

Merga's Petticoat.

CHAPTER I.

ABOUT A PETTICOAT.

'Dios ! I wish it was finished : it is weary work ; if it was not for the thought of what a love it will be, I could never sit so close to it.'

Merga sighs as she sits beside a window stitching at a gay petticoat. She and a pretty cat with a bushy tail are the only occupants of the room ; it is on a level with the ground, and is much cleaner and neater in appearance than the home of an ordinary Spanish peasant ; some of the furniture looks new, and there are several fresh gaudily-coloured prints on the walls. The little cottage is only two stories high, and the front is covered with a luxuriant vine.

The girl—she has only been married a few months—leans back and surveys her work.

'How envious the girls will be to-morrow, and how proud Benito ought to be of me'—a sigh—'but he's changed since we married ; he does not make half so much of me as he did. I almost wish I'd had Lopez or Pedro ; even foolish Andreas would have been more complying ; but old Teresa says men are all alike. Oh dear me !'

Merga bends over her sewing again, and her needle flies in and out in as determined a manner as if she were stabbing it into some one who had vexed her. She has been sewing the skirt on to a band, and when she has done this she rises, and fixing the petticoat over the back of a chair, she leans against the wall, one pretty little foot crossed over the other, gazing at her handiwork and showing her pretty, plump figure to great advantage. Merga is a charming Andalusian ; her dark lustrous eyes are enough to set all the village youths quarrelling for her. It is no wonder that his former rivals envy Benito Cuera the possession of his wife.

'Madre Santissima !' she says as she gazes at the bright scarlet petticoat with its black knotted fringe, 'how beautiful it is ! I'll make Benito take me to the bull-fight next week. Ay de mi ! I wish I was a real lady, then I should have new clothes every week, and never have to set a stitch in them.'

She leans her head back against the wall and closes her eyes. ‘Only fancy sitting in a gold chair of state and ordering folks about, and handsome caballeros praising my looks from morning till night.’ She gives a heavy sigh and opens her eyes, which look rather cross in expression. ‘Ah,’ she goes on pettishly, ‘Benito never says now, “You sweet Merga, how pretty you are!” Marriage has ended all his compliments. I’m sure it’s a month or more since he told me I had beautiful eyes. Men are strange creatures, and there’s no use in expecting them to be anything else.’

She seems relieved by this outbreak and goes back to her sewing. Presently she begins to sing in a very sweet voice:—

‘Then maidens, beware how you marry,
And carefully choose you a mate;
Don’t wed in a hurry—but tarry—
And put off your lovers with—“Wait.”’

Just as she ends, the door-latch is lifted and a young man enters the room. His figure is almost hidden by his brown mantal striped with orange and black, but he is a fine-looking fellow.

‘Ah mi querida;’ he sets down a small basket carefully on the floor, and gives Merga a loving smile. ‘I’ve been listening to your sweet piping. I never heard that song before—it’s severe, though.’

‘It’s very true,’ says Merga. ‘How soon you have come back! ’

‘Soon! I expected you would say I had been away an age.’

‘An hour’s a short age.’

‘An hour!’ Benito exclaims; ‘I have been away nearer three hours than one. I believe you think more of that petticoat than you do of your husband,’ he goes on impatiently as he sits down.

‘Vaya!—Merga has not left off stitching, and this irritates her husband—‘you should think about it too; you ought to be glad to think how well I shall look at the fête to-morrow. But tell me, querido, what news is stirring in the village,’ she adds with a smile that is lost on her husband, who sits looking angrily into the opposite wall.

‘News! well, unless you call the death of two old gossips last night, and a double birth of twins to fill their places, news—unless you call that news,’ says Benito, ‘there is none. Come, Merga,’ he goes on impatiently, ‘leave your finery, there’s a good girl, and give me something to eat—I am ravenous.’

All at once he starts up and looks round the room. ‘Carajo,’ he cries, ‘where’s the breakfast? I told you I wanted an extra good one. What have you been dreaming about? That cursed

petticoat takes up all your thoughts ;' he strides across the room to a large wooden cupboard, and throws the door wide open.

'Dios ! what a fuss about nothing !' At last Merga looks up from her work. 'To hear you talk, one would think I had committed a great sin.'

'Isn't it a sin to forget your husband's comfort ?' says Benito angrily ; then he remembers that a quarrel will certainly delay his breakfast, and he goes on more gently. 'Do, Merga, consider how hungry I am, and give me something to eat as quickly as possible.'

Merga puts down her work and holds up a finger.

'Patience, patience,' she says ; 'don't worry, there's a good fellow, and breakfast will be ready soon.'

Benito seats himself in a corner, but he looks sulky. He does not like this new state of things.

'It may do very well,' he thinks, 'with your whipper-snapper tame-snake fellows, but it won't suit me. I must have obedience and attention. Merga may work her will on the pots and pans, but not on me. I must be more peremptory, I see ; if a woman gets an idea that one is a sort of feather for her breath, by St. Jago, she will blow you out of window in less time than it takes an old woman to tell off a Pater ! Merga's too fond of fine clothes and of having her own way. Heaven knows, I don't wish to be harsh ; it's her fault if I am ; she knows my temper, and she ought not to thwart me.'

'Now the breakfast is ready,' cries Merga, as she goes back to her petticoat, 'you don't seem inclined to begin.'

'Don't I ?' he starts up, draws a chair to the table, and seats himself ; then as he looks he says, 'But, Merga here's only half rations. Where's the gazpacho ? By St. Jago, the wine-pitcher is empty ! Merga, do you hear ?' he says impatiently, when he sees that she does not move.

'Yes—yes—wait till I've sewn on this fringe——'

'Madre di Dios !' Benito jumps up, his face flushed with anger. 'I'll throw fringe and petticoat too out of window presently ; you're enough to enrage a saint.'

Merga gives a quiet smile.

'You are not a saint, Benito dear,' she says, and she sews on more rapidly than ever.

'Merga, give up that work—I command you ; you'll repent it if you don't.'

Though his voice sounds thick with suppressed passion, she bursts out laughing.

'Command !' her eyes flash angrily. 'Don't make me laugh so,

pray don't ; you are really too amusing : one would think you were a play-actor.'

' Throw it down, I say ! ' he shouts hoarsely, for he is very angry, and stepping forward he tries to snatch the petticoat from her. Merga holds it fast ; there is a crack, and the petticoat is torn.

Benito looses his hold and stands aghast, staring at the gaping rent ; he is quite cool now, but Merga looks like a beautiful fury, her bright eyes flash, and she pours forth a torrent of reproaches.

' Carrajo ! ' mutters Benito as he goes back to the table ; ' if a man could but take the measure of a woman's tongue before he married, I believe the world would be made up of spinsters and bachelors.'

' Dios, see what you've done ! you clumsy, rough-fingered bear ! ' Merga stamps both her little feet on the floor one after the other. ' Was there ever so unlucky a woman ? You horrible, ill-tempered creature, you couldn't have used me worse if I'd done some dreadful crime. I wish you were drowned, or—or anywhere, you passionate unmanly——' here her breath fails her, and covering her face with her hands, she sinks sobbing into a chair.

Benito meanwhile has stopped his ears ; then, as his eyes fall on the little cages for crickets hanging beside the open hearth, ' Ah, happy, happy crickets,' he says, ' your wives have no voices.'

It is almost the first time that Merga has cried since her marriage, and presently, when Benito looks round and sees the tears streaming through his wife's pretty fingers, and her bosom heaving with suppressed sobs, he begins to feel sorry for what he has done ; more than this, the whole quarrel has changed its aspect, and the blame has attached itself wholly to him.

He stands looking very sheepish, uncertain how to begin a reconciliation ; but he moves a step nearer to Merga.

She has left off crying, and when she hears him move she looks up, her dark eyes full of reproach.

' I shan't be able to show myself at the fiesta to-morrow,' she sobs.

Either Benito's conscience-stricken face amuses her, or she sees the absurdity of the dispute ; but no sooner has she spoken than she bursts out laughing.

For a moment Benito fairly gasps for breath ; he thinks she is in hysterics ; but as she goes on laughing quite naturally, he grows calmer, and running up to his wife, he throws his arms round her neck and kisses her heartily.

Merga throws back her head and looks at him, then she

laughs more than ever. ‘ You men are the drollest creatures living,’ she says.

‘ You women are a good match for us;’ he kisses her again yet more fondly, and then he takes up the torn petticoat. ‘ I am very sorry, querida—forgive me,’ he says. ‘ I was too hasty, but I’ll replace it with a better one. I dare say you can patch it up for to-morrow.’

There is a knock at the door.

‘ That’s the cobbler with my shoes;’ and Merga runs to open the door while Benito goes back to the table.

CHAPTER II.

‘ THERE’S REASON IN ROASTING EGGS.’

‘ Oh, it’s you, is it, Luisa,’ says Merga, opening the door to a woman with a sharp face and a long inquisitive nose, rather older than herself.

‘ Buénos Dias, neighbour,’ Benito says, with his mouth full of bread and bacon.

‘ Still at breakfast! ’ she says in a surprised voice; then, with a laugh, ‘ I thought by the noise I heard that you had both been at the wine-skin.’

‘ How so? ’ Benito goes on eating without turning his head. ‘ What did you hear? ’

‘ Aha, Benito, I see you don’t like to confess what you were saying.’ Merga looks archly at her husband as she goes to fetch the wine-pitcher. ‘ The truth is, Luisa——’

‘ Be quiet, we shall be the talk of the village,’ her husband whispers, for she is stooping to place the wine beside him.

‘ What need we care? I shall tell,’ says Merga saucily.

‘ I’ll give you half a dozen petticoats to hold your tongue,’ he whispers back.

‘ Tell me, Merga, what was the dispute? Never mind him.’

Luisa is a thorough gossip, and is sadly afraid of losing a promising bit of scandal. ‘ You know you can trust my discretion.’

Her wheedling voice alarms Benito; he feels sure that Merga will show her the torn petticoat and tell of their quarrel.

‘ It was her fault, Luisa, remember that,’ he says. ‘ She urged me on.’

Merga gives him a sly glance.

‘ I must tell her, husband. Well, Luisa, Benito was imitating a stage-player he saw when he went to Cordova, and I was

nearly choking with laughter at his antics—he looked like an angry monkey.'

Luisa laughs, but she does not believe a word. Benito, however, heaves a sigh of infinite relief, and drowns his wife's innuendo in a hearty draught of wine. 'Will you not eat something, neighbour?' he says, and he sets down the pitcher. 'Come and sit down, you and Merga too, one on each side of me. Try these onions, Luisa, they are excellent. Mild as the temper of your sweet sex—when it is not thwarted,' he mutters.

The women take no notice, and he goes on eating.

At last the sound of whispering rouses him and he looks round.

Merga and her friend are standing at the window in evident consultation about the petticoat. Benito frowns; however, he goes on with his breakfast, but he feels very impatient; every now and then the whispering becomes audible and he hears enough to show him that Merga is telling the story of the disaster to her friend.

He pushes back his chair.

'Merga,' he cries out, 'so far so good. Now I will finish with eggs; fry me some, querida.'

'There are no eggs;' Merga speaks crossly; she is in the act of receiving an important bit of advice from Luisa concerning the mending of the petticoat. Moreover, her friend's comments have made her see that she has forgiven Benito far too easily. She is ready to be angry again on the smallest provocation.

Benito smiles complacently.

'You are mistaken, niña; you have only to look in yon little basket, and you will find it is filled with fresh eggs—a present I received this morning.'

Merga tosses her head.

'If they are fresh, they will keep,' she says flippantly. 'I'm sure there's plenty to eat without eggs. You know how busy I am.'

'I wish for some—that's enough.' Benito speaks decidedly, and Merga turns to her friend.

'Is he not unreasonable, Luisa? he sees I have not time to eat my own breakfast, and yet he wants me to fry these eggs!'

'I should have thought this morning would have taught you a lesson.' His voice is full of reproach.

'And you too.' She holds up the torn petticoat. 'This, surely, should make you more modest in your requests.'

'Take the eggs, and begin.' Benito's anger is rising far beyond his power of controlling it. 'They might have been cooked while you have stood chattering over that cursed petticoat.'

'Let me fry them,' says Luisa; 'I've nothing to do.'

'So much the worse for you and your friends. Carrajo,' he roars out, 'I'll be fooled no longer. Merga, set about what I bid you at once. Do you mean to be mistress and master too? Madre de Dios! this shall not be.' He snatches a plate from the table, and going to the basket he takes out several eggs and places them on the plate.

He crosses over to where his wife stands, still holding the petticoat.

'Merga'—spite of his efforts, his voice trembles with suppressed passion—'I beg you will fry these eggs at once.'

Merga sees her husband's anger in his eyes, but Luisa has just been telling her that if she means to rule Benito, she ought to begin as she intends to go on, and she feels it will be cowardly to submit under her friend's eyes.

'No, I will not,' she says; and she sits down and goes on with her stitching.

Benito stands still, but the plate shakes in his hand; his eyes show a red light in them, and his nostrils dilate.

Luisa notes these signs, and she touches Merga's shoulder. She wants to warn the rash girl not to provoke her husband any further.

But to her surprise, Benito lays his hand quietly on his wife's shoulder and obliges her to face him.

'Once for all, will you do what I ask?' he says sternly; and when she meets his gaze, she half repents her obstinate freak. 'Will you?' he repeats.

'No'—she twists her shoulder out of his grasp—'not if you were to go on your knees to me.' She moves as she thinks beyond Benito's reach, but he springs forward, and setting down the plate on a stool, catches her round the waist.

'By all the blessed saints, you shall eat them, then, if I have to thrust them down your throat!' and taking up an egg, he tries to force it into her mouth.

She screams and struggles so violently that she strikes the egg out of his hand; and when he tries to get another from the plate, she trips the stool over, the plate is smashed, while the eggs roll away to the corners of the room.

Luisa thinks it is time to decamp, and she slips away unseen; while Benito, enraged by his wife's resistance, lifts her in his strong arms and carries her to the basket, in which there are still some eggs remaining.

Just as he reaches the basket several women rush into the cottage and surround him, crying out 'Shame!' and 'Coward!'

Luisa is not among them, though she has sent them to succour Merga. As soon as the girl hears their voices, she struggles out of Benito's grasp, upsetting the wine-pitcher in her efforts, and then flying to the staircase, she runs up to the sleeping-room above, some of the women following to protect her retreat, while the rest, aided by a new-comer, surround the discomfited Benito and almost stun him with a shower of reproaches.

CHAPTER III.

AN AWKWARD COMPLICATION.

At the opposite end of the village was the curate's pretty little cottage, surrounded by a small garden well stocked with fruit trees and aromatic plants and flowers ; the whitewashed walls almost hidden by the brilliant blossoms of the fig marigold. Just when the strife in Benito's cottage was at its hottest, the curate and his sacristan came out of the low doorway of this pretty little dwelling and walked slowly through the village. The curate was middle-aged, tall, and bulky, with a mild benevolent face ; the sides of his hat were rolled up until the two edges almost met above the crown, while back and front projected several feet. He limped slightly, and leaned on a stick as he walked.

The sacristan was old and bent, wizen-faced and withered ; he looked as if he had been set to bake brown in the sunshine ever since his birth.

Instead of going straight through the village, the curate and his companion turned off to the church only a short distance from the priest's house.

'Well, well,' said the curate ; 'I hope I shall find all as you say, Jeremias, in readiness for the fiesta to-morrow.'

'Ay, ay, your reverence'—Jeremias spoke in a high-pitched, conceited voice—'never fear ; leave me alone for that ; I haven't been sacristan this forty year, and made ready for holy days out of count, for nothing.'

In the village Jeremias went by the name of 'Old forty-year, never fear,' those words being constantly in his mouth. No one knew for a certainty how long he had been sacristan, possibly he did not know himself, but he stuck to the phrase he had adopted ; it gave him importance, and that was what he wanted.

But the curate had heard 'never fear' too often ; it conveyed to him no sense of security ; and now, spite of his lame foot, he

was on his way to the church to see the extent of his sacristan's preparations.

'Of course,' he said, 'you have had those choristers' surplices replaced—I mean, those that were lost—though lost is too mild a term, I fear.'

Jeremias left off hobbling, and stood still with his mouth wide open; then he slowly murmured 'Caramba.'

'What is the matter?' said the curate.

'Why, please your reverence, the surplices had clean escaped my memory.'

'And yet I spoke of them less than a week ago.'

'True, your reverence, but I've had so much to think of since your reverence sprained his ankle that—'

'Well, we must do the best we can without the missing surplices,' the curate went on; 'but of course you have had the leg of St. Jago mended.'

'Madre de Dios! pardon, your reverence;' the sacristan struck his stick on the ground and beat his wrinkled brown forehead with the palm of his left hand; 'and only yesterday I thought of it, and then something put it out of my head; but,' he went on in a soothing tone, 'I scarcely think the crack will be noticed.'

'You must not fancy everyone sees with your eyes, Jeremias; ' the curate spoke in a displeased voice; 'you have been very thoughtless. I hope, at least, you have had the banners mended where the rats gnawed holes in them.'

'Alas the day!' Jeremias's voice went up in the shrillest falsetto—'I—I fear they are not completed.'

The curate stopped abruptly, and assuming a severe manner, he said, 'What does this mean, Jeremias?—have you forgotten everything that was entrusted to you?'

'N—n—no—' the sacristan's knees shook, 'but your reverence has happened to hit on just the things I have forgotten.'

The curate walked on in silence, Jeremias hobbling after him with a crestfallen look on his face. Presently he said:

'What have you done about the boys and the musicians?'

Jeremias hobbled briskly up to the curate's side.

'Ah, I have well attended to that part of my charge,' he said triumphantly; 'I've got two more instruments from Gaeta who'll go near to wake the dead with their rare music. Some folks may say they play too loud, but they that do say it have souls above music, I take it; and I ought to know what's good by this time.'

The curate smiled at the change in the old man's manner. 'I'm glad you have remembered some of your duties,' he said.

'Ay—ay, your reverence, I haven't been sacristan this forty—'

'How do the boys sing now?' said the curate, impatient of the old man's vanity.

Jeremias stretched out both his lean brown hands.

'They sing like small angels, your reverence; it will do your heart good to hear them. I've had the whole teaching of them, too; for that Andreas knows little enough about singing, though he pretends to much knowledge. I've but one little fault to find with them: they will be now and then before or behind the players, a plague on the unruly urchins' throats: but boys will be boys. But they sing so loud and clear that you may hear them a mile off; so that makes up, for certain.'

At this description of the powers of his choristers the curate nearly burst out laughing.

'But if they don't keep time, Jeremias, I'm afraid——'

'Your reverence need fear nothing,' said Jeremias in his most perky manner. 'I have arranged it all. I have bid the players go quicker or slower as need arises; I have told them their cue is to follow the voices,—ay—ay—never fear, I haven't been sacristar forty years——'

Here a burst of cries and screams struck on the curate's ear.

'What's that noise, Jeremias?' he said; 'what is happening at the other end of the village?'

Jeremias shook his head: the sounds had not reached his dull old ears; but as he looked, he saw a man and two women running towards them.

'Something has happened,' said the curate; 'perhaps they want me.'

He stopped just outside the church and held up his stick to the runners.

In reply they threw up their arms and shouted out some confused words. In a moment or two the man outstripped his companions, and stopped panting before the priest.

'What is the matter, Llorente? is some one ill?'

Llorente shook his head, and spluttered out—

'Please come—your reverence, with all speed to—' Here the two women who had overtaken Llorente broke in—'Such work, your reverence! The monster will kill her!'

'He won't listen to us,' said Llorente.

'He's mad,' the women shouted.

The curate held up his hand. 'Peace!' he cried; 'what can I make of this Babel? Who are "he" and "she"? One of you tell me quietly what has happened.'

At this all three burst out at the same moment; but the

curate raised his hand and frowned. ‘Llorente, you can tell the story,’ he said. ‘Be silent, Teresa ; and you too, Juanita.’

‘It’s this, your reverence,’ said Llorente, speaking very fast for fear the women should take the tale off his tongue. ‘Benito Cuera and his wife are quarrelling like mad people, sending chairs and tables, plates and eggs, men and women flying about as if they had wings.’

One of the women, her eyes staring with eagerness, broke in :
‘ You don’t tell how the wretch is beating ——’

‘ One at a time,’ said the curate. ‘ What have these foolish people quarrelled about, Llorente ? ’

‘ About some eggs, your reverence.’

‘ Eggs, indeed ! well, matrimonial squabbles have too often a brittle foundation. I’m weary of this child’s play between man and wife.’

‘ There’s more than play here, your reverence. Benito swears if Merga will not swallow as many eggs as he chooses he’ll keep her on egg-shells and water for a week, and she vows she’ll die before she eats one ; she’s in fits now, I fancy.’

‘ This is very sad,’ the priest said. ‘ I will marry no more of you till you grow wiser.’

‘ Your reverence forgets the fees,’ said Jeremias, ‘ and the marriage and christening feasts.’

‘ But will not your reverence come to Benito’s house ? ’ cried the women. ‘ Poor little Merga will be killed if no one interferes.’

‘ Yes, yes, I will go ; ’ and he went on as fast as his lameness would allow ; ‘ but you parted them, did you not ? ’

‘ Oh yes, your reverence, we parted them ; but Benito was trying to get at her again.’

They were now near Benito’s cottage, and they could see that the garden was full of people, and also that a crowd had collected round it ; a fresh outcry burst from the cottage ; some rushed out, while others ran in ; but those who perceived the curate shouted and beckoned.

‘ The wretch is beating her again ! ’ the two women cried ; and they set off running towards the cottage.

All at once Benito darted out of the cottage. He stood a moment looking round him, and then he ran up to the curate.

‘ What does all this mean, Benito ? ’ the priest said, for Benito’s dress was torn and disordered—his face was flushed and looked as if it had not escaped the scratches of some of his female assailants, while his hair was ruffled and hung over his eyes.

‘ I’ll tell your reverence,’ he gasped, for he had had a sharp struggle to escape from the cottage.

'I am scandalised at what has been told me,' the priest said.
'Lay your hand on a woman, Benito—monstrous!'

'Your reverence has only heard one side of the story,' Benito said, as he recovered his breath. 'They haven't told you how that woman urged me beyond mortal endurance. She disobeyed me, she defied me, she laughed at me; soft words were wasted on her; she deserved punishment.'

'That may be, but not such punishment as you gave her.' The curate spoke severely. 'No provocation should have tempted you to lay a finger on her. You should reason quietly with a woman, seek to convince her—'

'Ah! if your reverence were married you would speak differently. 'Tis as useless to reason with a woman as to try and turn pebbles into cream-cheeses.'

'You are right there, neighbour,' said Llorente.

'Ay, ay, I've had forty years' experience of that,' quavered Jeremias.

'You talk nonsense, all of you,' the curate said; 'this matter is a disgrace to the village. Come, I will see this stubborn wife. When you grow calm, Benito, you will feel sorrow for your unmanly conduct. It is cowardly and cruel too to beat a woman—the wife of your bosom, whom you have sworn to cherish and protect—very soon, I hope, you will be ready to forgive, and also to ask forgiveness.'

'I can do neither, sir'—Benito spoke firmly but respectfully—'till Merga owns herself in the wrong. I feel that I was too rough, though I did not beat her as these folks say I did. My excuse is that she provoked me past bearing. I forgave her much unkindness, but now she must give way. Till she obeys me and begs my pardon, I will not forgive her.'

'Ay de mi! Ay de mi!' the curate sighed as he went on to the cottage. 'What is so stubborn as a wilful man?'

'A wilful woman,' thought Benito.

Just as the priest entered the garden arrived the doctor, who had been summoned by one of the gossips, and several women came hurriedly out of the cottage.

'Make haste! Make haste!' they cried.

'Merga is very ill: she may die for anything we know,' and they glared fiercely at Benito.

'You had better stay outside,' the curate said to him, and followed the doctor into the room where the quarrel had begun.

It was now a scene of confusion; chairs and stools had been overturned—broken plates and eggshells strewed the floor, while two of the neighbours had seated themselves at the table and were

devouring the remnants of Benito's breakfast. They rose when the curate entered, but as soon as ever the doctor had gone upstairs they fell to eating again. 'My proverb is,' one said to the other, as he filled his mouth, 'lost time can never be regained.'

Meantime Benito, grown cooler, stood outside the cottage explaining the real state of affairs to Llorente, Jeremias, and two or three other men who had been attracted by the noise to the spot.

'Well,' said Llorente, 'I say she has not been hardly used at all.'

'I should not have let her off so easy,' said one whom they called Pedro; and the others followed suit.

But Benito's conscience was tender; he was very fond of Merga, and very sorry that he had treated her so harshly and made a public scandal of the quarrel.

'No, no,' he said. 'You are all wrong. I ought not to have been so rough with the girl. I should have taken a quieter way. I don't stand out now because I think I have acted rightly, but only because I am determined to be master in my own house.'

There was a general applause.

'Vaya,' said Llorente; 'you must be firm, amigo, not only for your own sake, but to set an example in the village.'

While they stood chatting, a hum of voices reached them now and then from the room upstairs.

Llorente looked up at the window. 'I warrant you,' he said, 'they are making up a fine story for his reverence and Doctor Petriquillo.'

'Plague take all gossips!' said Benito; 'they are the curse of a village; they flock and pry into other people's troubles like flies to a honey-jar; they bring more mischief than they ever find, but I will disturb their devilry.'

He turned to enter the cottage, but before he reached the door he paused.

There was a sound of wailing, and then a loud outcry, followed by a rush of feet down the stairs. Several women hurried out of the cottage, but as soon as they saw Benito they poured forth such a torrent of lamentations and reproaches, and gesticulated so wildly, that he involuntarily retreated, for it seemed to him they had suddenly lost their senses.

After them came Petriquillo the doctor, his jolly red face covered with gloom.

As he caught Benito's eye, he held up his hands and then shook his head solemnly.

Benito's heart gave a leap, and then seemed to sink heavily.

'What's the matter?' he rushed forward to the doctor. But the women set up a louder wail than before, and crowding round

Benito, they seemed determined to oppose his entrance into the cottage.

The doctor again shook his head. Then he pushed his way through the group of women till he reached Benito. ‘I will tell him,’ he said.

‘This is a bad affair, Benito Cuera,’ the doctor began in a slow, solemn voice.

‘By St. Jago, I wish you and the women would all troop off and leave us to settle our own affairs,’ Benito said impetuously.

Petriquillo shook his head.

‘Unhappy man, it is too late: you can say “we” no longer. I never saw anything more sudden.’

‘What do you mean?’ Benito grew pale and caught the doctor’s arm.

‘Can you bear the shock, my poor fellow?’

‘Speak out at once,’ Benito cried in terror.

‘Well, then, I regret to say that your wife has sunk under your ill-treatment of her.’

‘Yes, monster, savage, barbarian, you have killed her! Woe, woe, woe!’ howled the women in chorus, all the louder for having kept silence while the doctor spoke.

Benito groaned and staggered backwards; he would have fallen if Llorente and the other men had not come forward to his support. ‘God help me, I am a miserable sinner!’ moaned the poor fellow when he recovered from the first shock. Presently he started away from the men who held him.

‘It can’t be,’ he cried, ‘I’ll not believe it;’ and he turned to the group of women who still stood in the front of the door.

‘Now it is too late he repents; his conscience reproaches him,’ a woman cried, and her words were chorussed by the rest.

‘You are joking at me, doctor; you do but wish to frighten me—is it not so?’ and he looked earnestly at Petriquillo.

‘Alas, my friend, it is as I say; from my heart I pity you.’ The doctor spoke softly and cast down his eyes.

‘I will see her!’ Benito exclaimed vehemently; ‘I will ask pardon over her body of her departed spirit. Then, do with me what you will.’ He broke suddenly away and rushed to the cottage door. ‘Let me pass,’ he said, struggling through the wailing group of women. But they clung to him like leeches.

‘Keep him away,’ cried Luisa, ‘or the monster will beat his poor wife’s body.’

‘Out of my way, you harpies, you she-devils!’ shouted Benito as he struggled to get free. At last by a violent effort he wrenched himself away from them, and rushing into the cottage began to

mount the stairs. All at once the curate came out of Merga's room followed by some women.

'What does this uproar mean?' said the priest. 'Are you not ashamed of yourself, Benito? Is this a time for fighting and shouting? Rather should you hang your head in penitence for what you have done.'

'Is it strange, your reverence, that I wish once more to see my wife? Why do these women prevent me from entering? It seems that I am not master in my own house!'

'No; you are not worthy to be,' shouted a woman who stood behind the curate.

'He that beats his wife is despised by all,' cried one of the group at the foot of the stairs.

'Peace, all of you!' said the priest. 'You, Benito, have done much harm to-day in your anger, and you have placed yourself in a dangerous position. Sin no more: when you are calm you shall enter your wife's room and gaze upon what you have done. I forbid you to do so at present.'

Benito was overwhelmed; he stood leaning against the side of the staircase feeling as though he were in a dream. 'You had better go away and keep quiet,' the curate went on. 'Reflection will bring you repentance. When you are quite calm you may return.'

While the curate spoke Benito started and made a step forward; a smile hovered over his lips, but he checked it. He made a low bow to the curate. 'I obey your reverence,' he said simply, and then he went downstairs and crossed the room below. He stood still when he reached the outer door and put his hand to his forehead.

Presently he looked round him. The curate was not on the stairs; when he saw Benito depart so quickly, he went back to the bedroom.

Benito looked at the women who now stood clustered together watching his movements. 'Ladies,' he said gravely, 'I believe you were right when you tried to prevent me from seeing my poor wife's body. I believe my nerves are not yet strong enough for such a sight. But I want to ask one question: you, Luisa, can best answer it, and I am sure you will not refuse to pour the balm this will give to my guilty but widowed heart.'

The women were so taken by surprise by this pathetic speech that they began to feel a sudden softening towards the offending husband, and Luisa asked him in a kind tone to tell her how she could give relief to his afflicted soul.

'Did—did she—alas, my feelings are too much for me!' said

Benito in a sad choked voice. ‘But tell me, Luisa, did my poor Merga, before she left this wicked world, fry me any eggs?’

The men who were present smiled: they fancied that the sudden shock had robbed Benito of his senses; but the doctor’s gravity disappeared altogether, and he flung himself into a chair in a fit of hearty laughter; while the women looked at one another in dumb surprise.

Benito stood waiting for an answer, and then, smiling quietly, he passed out into the garden. As soon as his back was turned, a storm of reproaches was sent after him, but he took no notice.

‘Llorente and Perez,’ he said to two men just outside the door, ‘come with me.’

He spoke a few words to them in a low voice, and then all three quitted the garden and went through the village.

CHAPTER IV.

‘How odd a single hobgoblin’s non-entity
Should cause more fear than a whole host’s identity.’

It is half an hour since Benito left the cottage. The women have either gone upstairs or are standing outside, but Jeremias and three other men, who stayed within, are enjoying their siesta in picturesque attitudes. The sacristan has curled himself up at the foot of the stairs so that he may hear when the curate leaves Merga’s room.

Presently a door opens above, and the curate, followed by two women, comes down.

‘They seem as fast as the seven sleepers of Ephesus,’ says the priest, when he sees the group.

‘Never fear—I’ve been—sacristan—forty year—’ Jeremias mumbles in his sleep. The women set up a shout of laughter which rouses the slumberers. Jeremias scrambles to his feet.

‘Do you know where Benito is?’ asks the curate.

‘No, your reverence,’ Jeremias stammers sleepily. ‘I’ve seen naught of him since he stood here.’

The priest goes into the porch and looks out.

‘Shall we go into the village and look for him?’ says Luisa.

‘It will be well to do so, and you can say I wish to speak with him.’

Luisa goes, followed by half a dozen others, and the curate goes upstairs again.

Another half-hour passes, but Benito does not return. The men go back to their siesta and sleep soundly, all except Jeremias,

who spends the interval in falling asleep and rousing himself with yawns that threaten to dislocate his lantern jaws; at last he mutters sleepily: 'I wonder Maria has not been to fetch me. If his reverence stays much longer, I must go home.' As he speaks loud voices are heard outside, and the women, who have gone to seek Benito, rush into the room.

'He is coming!' they cry; and they run upstairs, leaving the sacristan and the other men, roused by their noisy entrance, wondering what is going to happen.

Their arrival seems to have caused some commotion in the room overhead, for there is talking and a hurrying of footsteps to and fro, and in a minute or so two of the women come running downstairs and hurry out into the garden.

The men follow them. 'What's the matter? What's to be seen?' they ask eagerly.

'Benito's coming,' Luisa cries; she has got on a bench outside, so that she can see over the heads of those who stand beyond the garden fence; 'and there are ever so many coming with him; they're bringing a bier with them, and he has had a grave dug already. Isn't he a wretch?'

'A wretch? he's a villain, a disgrace to his sex!' the others scream in chorus.

'There—there—they are in sight,' cries Luisa, 'and there's the bier sure enough.'

'He's in a hurry to put her under ground,' says one of the men.

In a few minutes the hard-hearted widower comes into the garden followed by Llorente, Perez, and four of his intimate acquaintances. After these come four men carrying a bier, and after them the whole rabble of the village, who however stay outside the garden.

The curate and the doctor are in the porch when Benito reaches it.

'Why have you returned in this manner?' says the priest gravely.

'I wish your reverence to bury my departed wife before I leave this place for ever,' said Benito in a mournful voice.

'Such haste as this is indecent.'

'Unhappy man, you should have waited till to-morrow,' says Dr. Petriquillo, but his face twitches as if he suffers from severe internal pain.

Benito sighs deeply. 'I cannot remain here after what has happened. I shall leave to-night. Suffer me, then, your reverence, to have the miserable satisfaction of seeing my poor Merga laid in

her untimely grave before I go out to wander miserably through the world.'

He presses his hand over his eyes, and his broad chest heaves with suppressed feeling.

The curate hesitates, but the doctor whispers a few words in his ear; then the priest says to Benito: 'You may go to your wife's chamber.'

Benito turns to the men who have carried the bier. 'Leave that where it is and follow me,' and he goes into the house.

The curate raises his hand as if to forbid the entrance of so many, then he seats himself in the porch, and waits while the men follow Benito.

Jeremias has stood with his mouth wide open gazing first at the bier and then at the priest; now he mutters, 'Holy saints! I never saw such doings; he's mad to attempt such doings without asking me.' He hobbles up to the curate. 'Please your reverence, will you allow this unorthodox burial to proceed? What am I to do?'

'You need not do anything,' the priest says drily.

Jeremias shakes his head, and goes out to Llorente and Perez, who have remained outside, and who are surrounded by a group of men. 'It's my opinion,' says one of these, 'that Benito doesn't care a peseta about his loss.'

'Ah, you judge by your own feelings,' says Llorente, smiling; the speaker is the most henpecked husband in the village.

'No, indeed, for I should miss Juana. Now, old forty-year'—he turns on the sacristan as he comes up—'what do you say to it all?'

Jeremias has just opened his mouth to answer, when loud cries and the sound of a scuffle come from the cottage, and the men in a body hurry to the porch.

But as the foremost reach it they are thrust violently aside, and out rush the bearers who followed Benito with eyes staring and faces pale with horror. 'A ghost—a ghost!—the spirit of the dead! Holy Virgin protect us!' and they run frantically down the village street. The men who a minute ago had been eager to enter the cottage turn round and also flee away, crying out, 'A ghost! a ghost!' and the infection of fear spreads so rapidly to the crowd outside, that in a few minutes no one is left but the curate, the doctor, and Benito's companions, who have been nearly upset by the bearers' sudden exit; also the sacristan, who in his hurry to escape stumbled against the bier, and now lies on the ground on his face bawling like an overthrown schoolboy.

The curate leads the way into the cottage: there is Benito

coming slowly downstairs with a figure shrouded in white in his arms, on whose lips, certainly very red for those of a ghost, he is bestowing most hearty, sounding kisses, while the group of women behind him and those in the room below laugh heartily.

Benito carries the ghost to a chair, and places her in it, and then he and everyone else laugh merrily, the ghost most of all, as she pulls off her white head-covering and shows Merga's pretty face which has been so covered with flour that it looks much whiter than usual.

At last the curate waves his hand to obtain silence.

'I let you think your wife was dead,' he says to Benito, 'in the hope that the remorse you would feel might teach you a salutary lesson—I consider the end justified the means.'

'Well, your reverence'—Benito keeps one arm round Merga as if he fears he may still lose her—'I did feel a wretch at first; but while I stood on the stairs talking to you, I heard Merga laugh, and then I thought I would be even with you all.'

'I felt sure you smelt a rat,' says Petriquillo, whose face has recovered its natural jolly aspect, 'when you went away in such a hurry; and when you came back with the bier and such a long face, then I guessed what you were at.'

Benito looks down fondly at his wife.

'You have both been taught, I see, how wrongly you acted,' says the curate. 'I am sure you are determined to do better in future.'

Benito smiles, and Merga springing up throws her arms round his neck, while he clasps her fondly to him.

'What made those foolish fellows tumble downstairs just now and then run away in such a fright?' said the doctor.

Benito bursts out laughing at the remembrance of the scene. 'Merga lay still,' he says as soon as he can speak, 'till they tried to lift her off the bed; then she sprang up suddenly, and without another look they ran away shrieking "A ghost! a ghost!"'

'I've been sacristan this forty years, and I never saw a ghost,' says Jeremias's thin querulous voice; 'some folks are cowards—I say never fear.'

Merga looks up archly in her husband's face; then she whispers, 'Are you sure you're not sorry I'm not a ghost, after all?'

'My friends,' says the curate, 'Benito and Merga being thus happily reconciled, I think we had better leave them in peace. I trust we shall hear of no more unseemly quarrels.'

Merga puts her little hands together and casts down her bright eyes.

'I trust, indeed, your reverence,' she says, 'that I shall never

forget your counsels, and that to-day's disgrace will have helped to cure me of my silly pride and self-will. I have not been a good wife to Benito, but —she raises her eyes, which glisten with tears, though she smiles through them—‘I know he has forgiven me, and I promise him that the next time I am selfish and vain, he may bury me outright.’

Benito interrupts her by a loving kiss. ‘Stay, neighbours,’ he says, for all are following the curate and the doctor out of the room; ‘I too have much to atone for; I have this day behaved like a passionate, cowardly bear. Please forget it, and by my soul, I won’t recall it to your memory; and I know his reverence will help me to keep my word.’

‘Well said by both of you;’ the curate is still standing in the porch; ‘try to please one another, and then there will be no more quarrels as to which is to rule.’

KATHARINE S. MACQUOID.

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Across the Sierras.

THE great steam-ferry ploughed steadily across the slowly-heaving waves of San Francisco Bay. A grey mist shrouded sky and land and waters, and fell like a veil over the Golden City we were leaving behind us. We looked back at it from the stern of the boat, and our farewell gaze rested only upon what seemed the huge battlements of some gigantic castle looming dimly through the fog. No more than this was to be seen of the Queen City of the West with her hundred hills, her climbing streets, her forest of shipping, the barren sand-dunes at her feet, the mountains standing guard around her.

The Oakland boat—its great saloon a wonder of gilding and mirrors and velvet couches; its length of well-washed deck offering a wide smooth promenade to such as liked exercise—was bearing us and the other Overland passengers across the bay to the Overland train, which was to whirl us Eastward from California.

‘You’ll be lucky if you are not snowed up on the Sierras,’ observed a cheerful friend, rubbing his hands over our anticipated misery. ‘You’re going to run right into a snow-storm.’

‘We shall not starve, anyhow,’ we replied, regarding the promising dimensions of the luncheon-baskets which Joe the Chinaman, smiling, blue-bloused, slippers, pig-tailed, bore for our benefit.

‘I don’t know,’ said our friend, shaking his head. ‘My sister was snowbound for twenty days coming from Omaha.’

‘Let me introduce you to some fellow-victims,’ said another of the battalion of friends who had come to ‘see us off.’ It really seems as if the American would never lose a chance of ‘seeing off’ any one—friend or foe; and the Californian in this serious inclination is in no way behind his brethren of the Eastern States.

‘General A.’ and ‘Judge B.’ were duly introduced; we all bowed as gracefully as was possible considering that the boat was rocking like a cradle as she plunged over the waves, and the mighty wind that rushes in from the Pacific through the Golden Gate was endeavouring to carry off our hats and bonnets in spite of our restraining hands.

Our faithful Chinese Joe smiled serenely as one lady’s head-gear flew off and skimmed along the deck, and observed, ‘Muchee blowee.’

Arrived at Oakland Wharf, we found the train of long, yellow-

painted cars awaiting us, and had only time to discover in which of the ‘sleepers’ our berths were taken, and bid a hasty farewell to our friends, before the engine-bell clanged and we were off. ‘Good-bye’ is always a miserable word to say, and California is not a pleasant country to leave. The very bouquets in our hands, the April roses and calla-lilies, the parting offerings of friends too well loved to be lightly left, looked like sad relics; and as to the luncheon baskets—we were more inclined to shed a tear upon the home-made cake concocted by loving hands than to eat it!

The sun shone out and the morning mist faded away as we rushed through the smiling meadows and fertile valleys of the Golden State. We settled ourselves, our bouquets, and our small baggage very comfortably within the limits of the two cushioned seats which constituted our ‘section,’ and had even a fragment of a seat wherewith to accommodate our visitors, when General A. and Judge B., who were located in another car, came to pay us morning calls. At Martinez we were interested in seeing our great train cut in half, and the two halves run on to a huge ferry-boat which bore us across the Sacramento river. She touched the pier so that the tracks on boat and land exactly joined; we ran on shore; were put together again, and dashed on our way to Sacramento.

At Sacramento station the pleasing prospect was reported to us by General A. that a thousand feet of snow-sheds were wrecked on the line ahead of us, crushed beneath the weight of snow. Luckily, no train was under them. The superintendent had rushed off on a special car with a gang of men to clear the road for *us*. For we, the Overland Mail, were of no inconsiderable consequence. Were we not the one Eastward mail of the whole twenty-four hours? Solaced by the reflection of our own importance, we took a walk upon the platform amid a crowd of red shirts, round hats, and top-boots. The ‘Western boy’ of the paper-covered volumes on London railway book-stalls was largely represented, and ‘loafing’ about in swarms—quiet, impassive, orderly, as he always was whenever we came across him. An Indian wrapped in a gaily-striped blanket crouched on the steps of the baggage-car. His black eyes followed us stealthily as we passed; his stolid countenance seemed as though it could never change.

A handsome luncheon was set out on the counter, and the nimble and ever-smiling Celestials waited affably upon such travellers as chose to take their meal there. For us, we returned to our car, bade the mulatto porter set up the movable table in our section, spread our cloth, opened our picnic-baskets, and lunched in state. During the afternoon, as our train swung on its swift

and steady way through the beautiful Sacramento valley and flowering fields, we made acquaintance with our fellow-passengers, and mutually confided fragmentary portions of our histories. Once, when the train pulled up between two stations—and ran back two miles to pick up the engineer's hat which he had dropped—a couple of gallant Californians improved the occasion by jumping out of the car and scrambling down a bank to gather some boughs of manzanita for the ladies. The delicate green waxen leaves and exquisite pink and white bell-blossoms were gratefully accepted and pinned in our hats or dried in our guide-books. One pretty girl, going East alone, about whom we wove our little romance, fastened hers becomingly in her golden hair; one enterprising child, Tommy by name, was detected in ascertaining by practical experiment the flavour of the manzanita, and, on his branch being snatched from him by his alarmed parent, protested that 'grizzly bears ate the manzanita berry—Mountain Jim told him so—and why shouldn't he?'

In climbing the foothills of the Sierras we came upon new beauties of colouring in the landscape, the dark pine woods and the graceful sapling pines of paler hue contrasting with the warm ruddy tones of the banks of orange-red earth below and the vivid blue sky above. It was nearly evening, and as the sun sank lower and lower behind the mountains the cloudless sapphire of the sky deepened into diviner and more mysterious hues and still lovelier and lovelier grew the tender lights and the rich shadows of the pine forest flooded in the golden haze of sunset.

At Colfax, about twilight, the conductor made the announcement which we had all the afternoon been anticipating, that the line was blocked ahead of us and we could go no farther. We were ignominiously shunted into a siding, and left there to pass the night. I don't know how we should have killed time that evening by the light of two dim oil lamps hung so high in the roof of the car that we could neither see to read nor write, had not the Judge produced a pack of cards, the beauty of the car a box of dominoes, and Tommy's mother contributed the priceless treasure of the Fifteen Puzzle. The General and the Judge got up a whist-party, and a bachelor quartette at the end of the car enjoyed an uproarious game of Poker. The rest of the gentlemen disappeared; I think there was a saloon in the town, for they did not return till late, warbling the melodious strains of '*Upidee-idee-ida!*' which idiotic refrain appeared to be popular.

The porter pulled the sliding shelves from under our seats, which make the two seats into what is called a 'double lower berth,'

let down the upper berths, hooked up the curtains, and soon the car was a dormitory.

In the morning we breakfasted at six, and then started on our journey again. We rounded the wonderful curve of Cape Horn, where the railway track creeps like a spider-line round the face of a huge wall of rock towering high above and falling sheer two thousand feet below. We looked down on the tops of the tall pines half lost in mist far beneath us—looked away to the ocean of mountain peaks, like tossing billows frozen at their height, which frown down upon the great American Cañon.

We were soon in the snow-lands now. At the next stopping-place we all turned out of our stove-heated car in search of air and exercise. Air—fresh, cold, keen mountain air, we could get ; but chance of exercise, alas, there was none. Banks of snow were piled high on each side of our train ; we were literally in a narrow cutting between two snow walls ; there was scarcely room for us to alight from the slippery frozen steps of the car. The irrepressible Tommy leapt out and plunged at the snowy banks, and shouted to us all to ‘come down and play snowballs !’ We collected some snow in saucers, flavoured it with lemon and raspberry syrup from our stores, and handed it round to the gentlemen. ‘Take an ice-cream, Judge ?’ invited the beauty sweetly, just as Tommy, exhilarated by the General’s having playfully rolled him in the snow, projected a fine snowball with too sure an aim at the magnificent expanse of the Judge’s vest.

We climbed rapidly up the Sierras, and in less than four hours were at Summit, at an altitude of 7,017 feet—the highest point touched by the Central Pacific Railway. We next passed Donner Creek, hard by Donner Lake, the scene of one of the most terrible of all the tragedies that were enacted along this route, whereon the milestones are forgotten graves. We shuddered as we looked on the snow-covered mountains, and recalled the horrors of that story of the starving camp—the men, and even women, lost to humanity in the rage of famine ; the one heroic woman, faithful unto death—who rejected the offered chance of escaping with her children, and, seeing them on the road to safety, remained to die by her husband’s side—whose name is given to the creek that was the scene, and is the commemoration, of her sufferings and her deathless love. We turned away from the merciless shroud of snow that sheeted the earth, as it enfolded *them* that day—little more than thirty years ago.

Now we reached the region of snow-sheds. For hours we ran at slackened speed through these dark timber-galleries—like tunnels above ground. The back-blown smoke from our locomotive filled

the close air, so that we were driven in half-stifled from the platforms where we were taking an airing, and even in the car there was such a chorus of coughing that we might have been a party of consumptive invalids. It was too dark to read; and in our hearts we were in perpetual apprehension lest the event which had so lately happened—of the roof falling, crushed in by the weight of snowdrifts—should recur, in which case we should have had short shrift. Here and there we came upon great gaps in wall and roof, and broken timbers, the relics of yesterday's wreckage. Through these gaps we caught glimpses of the great Sierras never to be forgotten, brief as they were. Brief, for the scene was too dazzling for the eye to bear. The vast slopes of shining snow blinded us, emerging from our darkness, like a lightning blaze. Up to the highest heavens the clearly-outlined snow-peaks seemed to reach, and away to the horizon the immeasurable snowdrifts spread. We looked out upon a world of spotless, dazzling, blinding, wonderful white. The giant pines were clothed from head to foot in snow; but the proud heads of these monarchs of the mountain and the forest did not bend beneath the weight of their frosted silver crowns. Among those scenes which will come back to us in memory for ever, un-eclipsed in the future as unrivalled in the past, will always shine out those too brief glimpses of the wondrous white world of the Sierras!

At Reno we had descended to a level of 4,500 feet, and were in the great mining State of Nevada, at a junction from which the Virginia and Truckee Railroad runs to the mining centre, Virginia City, on the celebrated Comstock lode. Here we found the noble red man and his wives had ‘come out for to see’ us; and we returned the compliment by all turning out on the platform to see them. There were squaws old and young, some ugly as a heathen idol, some with a certain beauty in their bronze faces and great black eyes, most of them carrying a papoose, like a little mummy swathed and bound in a kind of wicker cradle and strapped on the mother’s back. A young squaw, no doubt the beauty of the tribe, with daubs of vermillion on her cheek-bones just where a natural flush would *not* be, attired in a buckskin petticoat and a blue blanket, stood immobile as a bronze statue, apparently unconscious of the Judge’s comments on her attractions. An old squaw, sitting huddled up on the steps, begged silently, with sinewy brown hand outstretched. Several braves, clad in blankets red, yellow, and green, crowded on the steps of the baggage-car. Each one had his gun, and we passed them with our meekest aspect. One had a civilised hat, under which his mane of wild coarse hair streamed out incongruously.

A couple of negroes and two or three Chinamen were also lounging about. Here, on this little strip of platform, the four races met. The white man elbowed the red man, of whose land he has taken possession, and who is dying and withering away before him ; the black man, whom he tore from his native soil, and through whom the blood of millions watered the ruined fields of the South ; and the yellow man, who is giving him trouble now and promises to give him more.

At the succeeding stations also the aborigines hang about the platforms and climb on to the freight-cars. Indians and editors ride free, 'dead-head,' as they express it. We pass through the land of the Piutes into the land of the Shoshonee, but our inexperienced eyes detect no difference in the aspect of these tribes. They all look very dirty ; and only through the rose-coloured glasses of romance can one perceive any picturesqueness in them to admire. But we must not fall into the common error of judging the red race by these half-tame specimens who hang about on the fringe of civilisation, left behind by the true Indian, who retreats to his fastnesses before the white man's advance, but

Speeds an arrow as he flies.

We are now on the great Plains. They were a waste of sage-brush and snow when we crossed them in the winter ; now they are a waste of sage-brush and sand. Nothing to be seen, to east and west and north and south, but barren desert, brown sage-brush, and yellow sand. Late in the afternoon our train pulls up in the middle of the desert to wait for the Westward-bound Overland to pass us, for across the Plains there is only a single track save at the crossing-places. We all snatch the opportunity of alighting from our car, and rambling about, ankle-deep in sand, picking specimens of sage-brush, and hunting for agates, which are said to be found here. Presently we see a puff of smoke on the edge of the desert—soon the distant clanging of a bell reaches our ears. The Pacific Express is coming. We jump up on to the platforms of our respective cars, and stand there to see it pass. The living street, the counterpart of our own, comes rushing on its way, half its passengers swarming out on the platforms, the rest crowding at the windows, to gaze at us as we are gazing at them. So the Eastward- and the Westward-bound meet and pass—so closely that hands are stretched in recognition and greeting from one to the other. 'How are you, Charlie ?' 'Hullo, Jack !' and two hands catch and clasp for a second as their train, slightly slackening its rush, sweeps past ours.

The excitement is over ; we are *en route* again. Soon the sun goes down in a very glare of barbaric splendour. The dark clouds

are broken up into a blaze of incredible colours. No artist save Turner would have dared to paint the vivid tints that flame and fade and melt at last into a wonderful gorgeous dappling of amethyst and gold.

In the evening, as we gaze out upon the dusky Plains, the dim horizon, the limitless desolation of this dead-level seems to crush us. We remember the pioneers who toiled, and starved, and fell by the way in the terrible journey across these pathless Plains. In fancy we see the ghosts of the waggon-trains crawling on their weary road. We think how

There lies the nation's great high-road of dead
Forgotten and unnumbered!

think how

The brown and russet grasses wave
Along a thousand leagues that lie one common grave !

And so the night falls, and at Humboldt—which our guide-book describes as an oasis in the desert—we alight for supper, and indulge in the luxuries of hot meats, fish, and vegetables—which are not comprised in our luncheon-baskets. We are fortunate that night in getting delicious antelope-steak and fresh mountain trout, and return to our car smiling and serene as a Chinaman.

We have not recovered the twelve hours we lost at Colfax, although we have been running at extra speed across the Plains, and this night it is evident that the engineer is ‘doing his level best’ to make up time, for we are tossed up and down like shuttle-cocks in our beds as the car plunges and jolts over the roughly-laid road, which was never built for express speed.

The next day, our third day on board the cars, we skirt the great American desert, and come upon the inland sea of the Salt Lake, its green glassy expanse shining in the sunlight. The waves which sometimes dash against its bold promontories are sleeping calmly to-day; we run for some time beside its fair and sunny waters, glittering like multitudinous diamonds in the golden glare of the sun. About four o'clock we reach Ogden, and, being still some seven hours behind time, are besieged with inquiries from the crowd on the platform as to whether we have met with any accident. The thunder of a great Chinese gong summons us to dinner in the little railway hotel—a narrow slip of a building sandwiched-in between two parallel railway lines.

At Ogden we say good-bye to the bright yellow Silver Palace cars of the Central Pacific, and take our appointed places in the dark brown Pullman Sleepers of the U.P. Our little knot of friendly fellow-travellers mutually inquire as to the location of our berths. ‘Which car are you in?’ ‘I am in the Colorado;’ ‘Ours is the

Laramie ; ' 'Come and see us in the Colorado,' and so on. Established in the 'Laramie' car, we are off again, setting our watches afresh, for we have kept San Francisco time till now, and find ourselves over an hour backward.

We are fortunate enough to arrive at the wonders of Weber and Echo Cañon by daylight. The best view is from the rearmost platform of the train, so we join the Judge and the General in the rear car, and take up our places on the platform, the gentlemen chivalrously securing our safety by taking the outside places as the car sways and jolts round sharp curves and over narrow and fearfully frail-looking trestleworks. We would fain slacken the speed of the train as we rush through these marvellous mountain defiles, that we might dwell longer on the battlemented cliffs towering two thousand feet above us, the rugged peaks that cleave the sky, the fantastic formations of the rocks. Here is one isolated column called the 'Idiot'; we have no time to discuss the open question 'Why?' for our attention is claimed by the 'Kettle,' the 'Steam-boat,' the 'Three Witches'—three pinnacles looming weirdly through the gathering twilight in a vague likeness to the female form divine; then the 'Witches' Bottles,' which are as big as the Witches, and the 'Devil's Slide,' an odd freak of nature, two long low straight walls of granite running down the steep face of the cliff for nearly a thousand feet in rigid parallel, suggesting to us that it would, if frozen, be an admirable spot for tobogganing.

Night closes once more, and once more we beguile the evening with whist and euchre, a traveller returning Eastward from the Eureka mines instructing us in the latter game. In the morning we arise light of heart, for we are nearing the end of our journey. We are going to branch off to Denver City this evening, and hope to arrive there before the small hours of the morning, and sleep this night in a bed that does not leap and lurch beneath us. Our spirits are somewhat dashed by having to wait three hours for breakfast. We rise at seven, and the train makes no stop till ten. Then we hurry the porter off to fetch us coffee, butter, and milk. Our bread and biscuits are running short, but by way of counter-balance we have a whole plum-cake left. We exchange with the party whom we always and only know as 'the "Tommy" family,' from the name of their ubiquitous offspring, and who have abundance of bread, while Tommy clamours for cake. We further exchange preserved peaches and potted lobster, and are all content —far better satisfied than are those hungry passengers who scorned the modest provisions of picnic-baskets, and responded to the clamorous summons of the gong outside the breakfast-saloon,

They return grumbling, having paid a dollar each for tough steak and slop coffee.

To-day we are on the Plains again, but now the dead monotony of sage-brush and sand, brown-yellow prairie and blue sky, is varied by glimpses of distant peaks, and here and there the horizon is broken up into rugged mountain outlines, and the dead level undulates. We are now making the ascent of the Rocky Mountains, and late in the afternoon alight at Laramie, 7,123 feet above sea-level, to enjoy a hasty run in the keen bracing air and inspect the stuffed heads of elk and buffalo exhibited on the platform. Then we continue our ascent into the regions of snow again, the white summits of the Snowy Range floating like stationary clouds in the distance. At Sherman we reach the highest point touched by the Union Pacific Railroad, an elevation of 8,242 feet. We have been told we ought to feel symptoms of distress here from the rarefied state of the atmosphere. But we feel nothing—although certainly the beauty of our car looks very pale and asks for *sal volatile*; the Judge pulls his hat down over his eyes and shivers in his corner; even Tommy's exuberant spirits appear dashed—but this effect we attribute to the disappearance of a whole can of potted lobster. He is, however, equal to the effort of concocting a big snowball to throw at us as we tramp up and down on a path of frozen snow—for the great secret of enjoying the Overland journey is never to lose a chance of exercise.

Now, again on, on over the snow-covered plain! it seems impossible that this vast desert-level is 8,000 feet above the level of the sea. We are descending, but so imperceptibly that when we reach Cheyenne Junction that evening, having descended 2,000 feet from Sherman, it has seemed a level run all the way.

Here our harmonious party breaks up. The Judge is going to dine and sleep at Cheyenne, and take the stage at dawn to the Black Hills. The General's route lies across the arid plains of 'Bleeding Kansas.' We take the train which is in waiting on the Colorado Central line, and which sets off with a preliminary plunge and jolt that gives us a pleasing foretaste of the healthful shaking-up in store for us for the next half-dozen hours. And now we are sorry that the long day-and-night journey in the pleasant social car is over, and the snowy world of the Sierras is a thing of the past to us; and in the deepening twilight we lean out of the window to watch the last glimpses of the waving hands and handkerchiefs of the Eastward-bound travellers as the Atlantic Express rushes on its thundering way.

IZA DUFFUS HARDY.

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Rhodostephane; or, The Artist's Revenge.

I LIVE in a terrace at the west end of town, the extreme west end. It is not a fashionable terrace, nor a particularly healthy terrace, nor a lively terrace, nor, my friends say, is it a terrace at all. They call it a Mews, and, with a momentary condescension to their peculiar style of wit, if it amuses them to call it so, so be it. But my landlord calls it a Terrace. It is true that the roadway is generally blocked for half its width by heaps of straw, that it is the exercise-ground of half a dozen horsebreakers, and that the carriages of my neighbours in the next square do often pass this way before taking up their load; but, as I said, my landlord calls it a Terrace, and so considers it in his rent. As is my Terrace, so was I. I wasn't fashionable, I had never been presented at Court, nor even dined with the Lord Mayor, though I had met him officially. I was not witty enough (so my friends would have said), nor wealthy enough (as I should have said), nor of sufficiently high descent, to be welcomed by society with open arms. I was out of the great world, and, from my standing-point on the fringe of fashionable London, I watched its pomp and pageantry passing by. It is true I longed to join in the procession, as children long to make a part in the Lord Mayor's on the ninth of November. I had much the same mysterious admiration for it, and the same hope, seemingly quite baseless, that I might one day form a part of it. But I had a friend in one of the men in armour, I mean in a man of fashion, a great artist whom the world delighted to honour, who would occasionally show me something of what went on behind the scenes. And, as I am about to explain, when he retired from the stage, he gave me his place, generous man and far-seeing that he was!

He was my fashionable friend, my only one. He did not repudiate the friendship of our youth, when he became great; and I repaid him for it. Sunday after Sunday for years I would look in upon him in his studio, as he sat at breakfast. I would examine the progress made during the week and give him my thoughts upon it. I had an eye for art, and he knew it. He accepted my views, he acted upon them. I educated his practical eye in the theory of his craft, and laid bare to him, painter though he was, the hidden meanings and depths of the art. I never ceased adjuring him to display incisive breadth, luminously sympathetic colouring, and delicacy of texture. I did not allow even his luncheon to deprive him of hints that he would often say were too valuable to

be given to him in private, but should have been reserved for some public occasion. Not that I would take advantage of his unselfishness, but would even remain and talk of art until his fashionable friends came. Then I left him, and I flatter myself that his Sunday evenings were not spent to such advantage. He was a good-natured man was Sir 'Little' Rober, P.R.A., and I have even overheard his worldly friends say that he could never bear to hurt the feelings of a fool. I dare say it was so. At any rate, he was thoughtful and considerate, and I have known him beg me to jot down the ideas that occurred to me, and not to waste my whole Sunday upon him. But there is much in the sympathy of personal influence, and in the power of propinquity, as I have often told him. I found that he did not derive the advantage from my notes which I could have desired, and his servant was too apt to overlook and even sometimes to destroy them. So I returned to the old plan, and our delightful Sunday mornings were resumed. Alas, not for long was he spared to reap the benefit of my friendly suggestions. A wasting fever seized him, and knowing full well the value of a companion with whose art-feelings he could even in sickness fully sympathise, I would have gladly sat with him. But the doctors,—whose ideas never rise above mere bodily ailments, and whose bearing is wanting in the repose which art bestows upon its votaries, and which especially marked my late friend the President,—the doctors somewhat harshly insisted upon him being left to himself. In ignorance only, I trust, they denied to him a last interchange of ideas with his fellow-worshipper in Art's temple. He died, and so doing made me famous. He left me his great painting, now so well known to the world, but which, with a modesty I can fully understand, he had long jealously secluded. He left me his *chef d'œuvre*, his Rhodostephane. I was the owner of Rhodostephane, that picture of mysterious, esoteric, yet fashionable loveliness. I, who every morning, Sundays excepted, sat on a high stool in the counting-house of Messrs. Below, Parr, & Sons, and whose opinions of art, nay, whose very acquaintance with the P.R.A., asserted on that stool, met with a churlish lack of sympathy, I was the owner of that picture for which dukes and untitled millionaires had offered their tens of thousands, to view which an Emperor had crossed the sea, and at its mere conceptions of which the æsthetic world had melted into tears. It was mine! and, for the condition, I glорied in it. Was I one to exchange immortal art for the worthless dross that lower natures value? Never to part with it, and to bequeath it to his heir at my death,—ah! what a mark of precious sympathy, what a declaration to the world of my share in his deathless creations, was here!

But to the picture. I had it removed with the greatest care and at considerable expense, which in truth I could scarcely afford, to my rooms in the Terrace. I had but one sitting-room, and there, when the balcony had been propped and the window enlarged (it would not pass through the doors), the treasure was safely bestowed. My style of furniture was sombre, not to say dingy, and, as a setting for the gorgeous lights and shades of Rhodostephane, might be said to be a failure. Some of my friends (the office sympathised now) would fain have had me keep it so, saying that the contrast set off the rich colouring of the masterpiece. But I, who thoroughly understood the composition, would not be unworthy of it. I re-furnished throughout in dead gold and sage-green. Oh, the pinching that cost me! but I soon had my reward, and found I had done it none too soon. The event was bruited about: the will was in all the papers; I awoke to find myself famous. I passed from obscurity to lustre in a night. They crowded to call upon me—they, the great world. They did not come by twos and threes, and beg the honour of my acquaintance, but they came in shoals—ay, and in carriages—and asked to see the owner of Rhodostephane. I was glad to meet them half-way, and indeed they did not need even that. They crowded into my room at all fashionable hours, and sometimes at others, and would stand and gaze at the picture and hear the remarks I had to make upon it. Indeed, I found it necessary to resign my situation in the city in order to do the honours properly. I was asked to dinners and dances and stand-ups, though it is true the invitations sometimes omitted my name, and were simply addressed to ‘the owner of Rhodostephane.’ I had to dress myself in a style to suit the picture when at home (rich dark-coloured velvet becomes me well), and so as not to disgrace it when I went abroad. I was stared at so that I often exclaimed, ‘And this is fame!’ Certainly it was expensive, and my private income, small as it was, upon which alone I now depended, was fast swallowed up. But the fashionable world was at my feet, or rather in my rooms. That temple of art, for so it had become, was constantly choked with their broadcloths and satins. Callers were so frequent that my landlord trebled his charge for attendance when I could least afford it, and exacted a periodical sum for the wear and tear of my stair-carpets. But what of that? My afternoon teas were the rendezvous of all that was fairest and most æsthetic in the aristocratic world. I had no time to return visits, I was always receiving them. In truth, I was never alone. Young guardsmen would call in the small hours, and emperors looked in before breakfast. I resembled royalty in that the pleasures of solitude were denied to me. As I walked in

the Park the little boys cried out, ‘That’s him!’ and ran in front looking back in my face. Strangers from the country scanned me through eye-glasses, and asked audibly, ‘Which is he?’ Nay, it went further. My Terrace was rechristened Rhodostephane Terrace, and all the rents were raised to correspond. Months went by, and still I was the lion *par excellence*.

Then, when life held out to me its rarest sweets, I suddenly found myself ruined. Yes, as suddenly as I awoke to fame, did I awake to the unpleasant certainty that I had not a sovereign, but that I owed a great many. I had lived up to the picture, I had sacrificed all to it, I had made it my sole consideration, and this was the unlooked-for result. How little had my late honoured friend thought of this when, in gratitude for my assistance, he left me that which, in a prophetic spirit, my employer at our last interview styled a white elephant! Ah, but why not exhibit it? The thought suddenly struck me, and I saw my way to fortune. But it was not to be; and in this wise. One evening, when I returned at a late hour reflecting upon this plan, I found my door besieged by the retinue of an Indian prince. His highness was reposing his royal person, bedecked with diamonds and resplendent with the richest shawls, upon the steps of my stairs. The Mahara-jah Ragobag Row threw himself before me in spontaneous homage to the owner of the world-renowned picture. In words of eastern imagery, and with an extravagance perhaps borrowed from his native tongue, he implored of me permission to have a private view of the masterpiece. ‘Not even your presence, happy possessor of the immortal work, would I fain enjoy at that blissful moment when my soul drinks deep draughts at the divine fountain of all that is purest in art. Afterwards let my ears hear the golden utterances that you alone, the part creator, can pour forth.’

I was not surprised at the request, for admiration was so constantly offered, that I was used to every possible expression of it. People of all kinds came at all hours to see me, and made all manner of requests. I readily acquiesced in his desire, and leaving his swarthy suite upon the stairs, I ushered him into my sitting-room. Sympathising with his feeling, I reverentially withdrew to my bedroom, and composed a few valuable hints, such as this stranger might carry back to his own land. How deep was his admiration! and how long! Yet, I was loth to interrupt his raptures, having his special request in remembrance. But at length, fearing that his emotions might have proved too much for him, I gently entered the artistically lighted apartment. Where was he? Had he gone, then, without waiting to hear my remarks? Foolish man! But where was—yes, it was too true—the picture,

my Rhodostephane, my very soul, which had ruined me and was to save me, *was gone too!* A great blank space inside the empty frame alone met my frenzied gaze, and I fainted. From that day to this, I have never seen the masterpiece. Without it I am nothing and have nothing.

And worse, my creditors refuse to discharge me: true, I can but offer them three halfpence in the pound, but I have assured them again and again that the money has gone in a good cause, in the putting a great model of art properly before the world. In vain, too, have I petitioned government to reimburse me for an expenditure truly national. How little did my late honoured friend (all my friends are *late* now) think to what his bequest was dooming me, who so assiduously aided him with advice in all his projects! Reader, a most unfortunate man bids you farewell, before indignation and grief overcome him.

S. J. WEYMAN.

Jack Harris Discourses on Woman.

‘COME,’ wrote Jack Harris to Theocritus Marlowe, ‘come, oh sweetest of singers and wisest of philosophers, and discuss with me one of the greatest problems that can vex our poor humanity. I am ill at ease, and you can perchance assist me—you and those others whose fair friendship lends to our united lives such poetry as was known to the companions of Socrates beneath the whispering plane-tree by Ilyssus, or to those perhaps more favoured mortals who caught their first love of culture from the lips of a Lorenzo. You shall learn what troubles me, not now, but at that sweetest season of the day when the bodily desires are satisfied:

αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ πόσιος καὶ ἐθητύος ἐξ ἔρου ἔντο.

and the soul, informed by the divine madness of Dionysos, floats unfettered in the blue ether and moves among the multitudinous stars.’

Theocritus was much moved by this letter from his poetic soul’s brother; so too were the other friends to whom Jack addressed himself. All wondered what the portentous problem might be which could cast a shade of doubt over the fine intellect of their leader. With an almost painful anxiety they awaited the day that the poet had appointed, and they hailed its arrival with all the joy of disciples about at last to be initiated into the final mysteries. Nor was their pleasure single-edged. Jack’s dinners were famous among his friends. The canons of artistic fitness upon which his life was based, while they served to measure all the highest seekings of the soul, were no less applicable to the arts consecrated by the spirit of Brillat-Savarin. So Jack’s allies were always glad to seat themselves at the round table in the dining-room of the poet’s chambers overlooking the Thames. The room itself was a constant delight to him and them, with its dado of ebony exquisitely inlaid with ivory, and its walls and ceilings of dull gold, enlivened by inscriptions from Mimmernus dwelling upon the brevity of youth and the joys of love. At one end a window with a balcony overlooked the Thames, where it was pleasant to sit and smoke away long summer evenings, and at the other was the great picture of Heliogabalus Murdle, his *Aphroditia Apostrophia*, with Sappho’s hymn to the goddess blazoned on the wall beside it. The table itself was a work of

art. From forth a profusion of many-hued and scented flowers stood stately Venetian flagons, and glasses of lovely form and lovelier hue; while plates of every kind, from the real willow-pattern with the mark of the Emperor Hwang upon it to lustrous Gubbio ware, stimulated the appetite through the artistic senses. No glass, plate, or bottle was like another, Jack proudly boasted. In the centre a human skull stared with hollow orbs from beneath brows that bore in paly silver the words 'Eros' and 'Thanatos,' while its empty cranium was filled with dried rose-leaves and strange spices and the ashes of burnt love-letters. At this table, when the day brought the hour, sat Theocritus Marlowe, Heliogabalus Murdle, who was becoming famous as a painter of beauty, Boiardo Polwheedle, the great Oxford art critic, dear to 'æsthetics for the fashion in which he denounced all who disagreed with him as 'dullards and dunderheads,' and finally the giver of the feast, Jack himself, whose face was anxiously scanned by his guests to see if haply they might read there something of the vast problem which had proved too great for his unaided efforts.

When the banquet was done and the bright exchange of talk grew brighter, Jack, who had hitherto refused to give any clue to the thoughts that occupied him, filled himself a tall glass with Lacrima Christi, slowly emptied it, and then, gazing upon his friends, said: 'The problem which harasses me may be summed up in one word, "Woman." A murmur of surprise and wonder ran round the table.

'Woman,' sighed Theocritus Marlowe, 'is indeed a marvellous problem to most of us; but to you, my dear Jack, I should have thought that she had long since ceased to present any difficulty.'

'So, indeed, I thought once,' Jack answered, 'and I felt that the word would surprise you coming coupled with any doubt from my lips; and yet, I must confess it, I am perturbed. It is not, of course, any of the simple forms of the problem that trouble me. The knowledge for which I seek is rather to know the place which we who live the higher life should allow woman to hold; how far we are wise in admitting her as an artistic influence; what niche she should occupy in the pantheon of our existence. It pains me to reflect that the influence which is so potent in our lives is, after all, but an undefined factor.'

'Ah!' sighed Theocritus, flinging himself upon a heap of roses that lay before him on the table, 'why did we ever allow that glorious institution of the Courts of Love to pass away? Oh for an hour of rose-girdled Provence, where such doubts as these would soon be set at rest by that higher tribunal!'

'I am not sure,' observed Boiardo Polwheedle, 'that we are

right about those Courts of Love, which seem really to have belonged to a later and less truly poetic period than the highest moments of Provençal inspiration. Now, if you read Hueffer's "Troubadours—",

'We wander from the theme,' Jack interrupted. 'No Courts of Love could answer my question, for they only acted upon certain received relationships of man and woman, and I seek to know what those relationships should be, and how they should be interpreted by us whose nobler purposes set us apart from common humanity. Where I speak of Woman I speak of course also of love. Let us begin at the beginning, after the fashion of the wise master of the Platonists. How, my dear Theocritus, would you define Woman?'

'Woman,' interposed Heliogabalus, 'is nature's epigram.'

'By Woman,' said Theocritus, 'I understand all that is chiefest in life, all that lends to song its most divine re-echoes; the grace of shapely limbs, the touch of soft hair, the light of loveliest eyes—for I presume, dear master, that you speak to us only of beautiful women.'

'To us, in our higher life, none other exist,' said Jack sententiously.

'Except, of course,' said Boiardo, 'such women as Madame de Staël, and George Eliot, and Georges Sand; these were not beautiful, and yet we owe them much. It is pretended, too, that Sappho was not so lovely as we should wish to believe her; and as for Queen Cleopatra herself, the image on her own coinage does not testify to any marvellous fairness.'

'These are indeed exceptions,' Jack said; 'or rather, not quite exceptions, for their genius lends them, by its fascinating powers, the quality of those charms they lack; and we, by the magic of our intellects, are able to see them rightly, to transmute them as it were: in fact, we elect them to be beautiful, and beautiful they become.'

Boiardo bowed his head, convinced by the eloquent reasoning of his friend. 'Such,' he said, 'is the awful power of love which is, in its truest sense, the worship of beauty. We are like the watchers in a temple, cowering upon the sacred floor and covering our averted eyes with reverential hands in humble homage to the holiness that fills our being with dreams of divinity.'

'Worship is great,' said Theocritus, 'but passion is greater. Give me the consuming fire of Sappho's song, the love that shook her spirit as the wind when it falls on mountain oaks. Love and passion are inseparable. In that trinity of divine desire which the Greeks represented by Eros, Pothos, and Himeros, there was no deification of mere adoration. I have of course an intense

admiration for the love of a Dante for his Beatrice, of a Petrarch for his Laura, but I must place myself high above the passionless praise of the one or the unanswered longings of the other. I must be torn by tumultuous passions. Love is for me the flame-clad youth, fitly invoked in those words of the Lesbian as a bitter-sweet tameless wild-beast. I worship Woman with clashing cymbals and tossing thyrsis, not with the amiable lutings of Tuscan sonneteers.'

'Do not speak so harshly of sonnets,' interposed Theocritus. He was thinking of his work 'Dandelions,' the exquisite little volume which he had just privately printed for the benefit of his friends. This work consisted of a single sonnet, every line of which was printed separately on only one side of a page. 'It is my favourite form and best expresses my attitude towards Woman. The poet may wander awhile fancy-free, like the fawn of Lucrezia's lover, the tuneful Bembo :

Così senza temer futuro affanno
Moss' io, Donna, quel di che bei vostri occhi
M' impagar lasso tutto'l lato manco ;

and then the spirit naturally expresses itself in the sweet restraint of fourteen lines. I have a sonnet of my own which I should like you all to hear, for it puts my position very beautifully :—

Blossom that wooed the sun-god long ago,
Wooing in vain, and so for evermore
With spread of passionate petals must adore
Thy lover in his latest sunset glow ;
With what a perfect fitness didst thou show
In the device that Geoffrey Rudel bore
Across wan waters to the scorching shore,
And looking on his lady perished so.
Be thou my blason too, who seek to sing
Of love alone and of my lady's face,
That shows no kindness for my misery :
My youth before her cruel feet I fling,
Content if only in her sovereign grace
Beneath her tread she deign to trample me.'

A hush followed the reading, first broken by Jack. 'That is very beautiful,' he said. 'There is nothing, to my thinking, even in the sweet Tuscan, at once so tender and so eloquent. The golden grace and jewelled simplicity of the style is only rivalled, not eclipsed, by the harmonious movement and august majesty of the verse. There is a little thing of my own that I will, following the example of Theocritus, read to you, in which in some measure my philosophy is shown forth.' He produced a sheet of parchment—Jack always wrote on parchment—and read as follows:

' Ye that may hearken to this song of mine
 Shall drink with me deep draughts of that sad wine
 Which oozes drop by drop like tears of blood
 From the thick clusters of life's desolate vine.

And we shall stray in lonely groves, half lit
 With melancholy moon and stars that flit
 Through the dejected desert of the sky
 Where man in vain would find his fortunes writ.

Or weary of much memory we may rest
 By lonely pools and copsees near the nest
 Of that sad bird of love the nightingale,
 Who sings for man the sorrow in his breast.

And I will take you to a temple where
 Is carved a godlike image fiercely fair,
 Chained to a rock, and bid you know desire
 In that fair form and in his chains despair.

And we will there do homage to man's dreams
 And weep their unfulfilment by wan streams,
 The silent streams of night that seem to flow
 Towards where some distant Lethe ocean gleanus.

Soon the lean fingers of the leaden hours
 Will from the rose-tree pluck the fairest flowers
 And carpet the green earth with rotting leaves
 Stirred by sad winds and watered by chill showers

Too soon, alas! the laughing girl we love
 And vow by all the spangles up above
 To worship, she will wither and grow old,
 As worn and worthless as a cast-off glove.

The air is chilly and the days are dull.
 In vain, in vain the fairest fingers cull
 The fairest roses for the festal wreath
 When every wreath is wound about a skull.

Where is the pleasure in the wine ye quaffed
 When ever to your longest, deepest draught
 There comes an end? Of what avail your jests,
 When all forget that you have ever laughed?

Yea, all must wither; love's bright torch goes out,
 Trod into dust beneath the heel of doubt,
 Or puffed at by old age, or plucked by death
 From the bright-handed angel put to rout.

But while the altar standeth, feed its flame
 With the warm breath of love. Forget the shame
 Of shifting days and hours that know not pause,
 And lovely things returning as they came.

Be love my song, then, and my lady's praise
 Blend with the burden of departing days
 Moaned by the grave of buried hope and love;

And worship of fair women guide my ways.'

A religious silence fell upon the company and held them for a while. Boiardo was the first to speak. ‘There,’ he said, ‘we have the supremest expression of the infinite, the completest definition of the utterly undefinable, for which we may venture to hope.’

‘Yes,’ said the young painter; ‘it expresses that hunger and thirst after beauty which consumes us, that quest after goodlihead which impels us as the lords of Arthur’s court were impelled to seek for the San Greal. Art demands that a woman must be beautiful, and art has to be obeyed.’

‘But,’ said Jack, and there was a melancholy music in his voice, ‘even when we settle the imperative necessity for woman to be beautiful, we have yet to determine our own relations to beauty and to her.’

‘To rightly understand this,’ said Boiardo, ‘we must go back to the Greek world; we must forget, as Winckelmann forgot, the miserable modern existence, and steep ourselves in the antique Hellas. I once wrote a beautiful little poem on the aspirations of a girl of to-day to return to the womanhood of Greece, which, as you have set the example, I will, if I can recall it, recite to you.’ He paused for a few seconds with his hands pressed to his head, and then began :—

‘Let me close my eyes an instant, let me dream a Grecian life
 While my liberated fancy deems itself the loyal wife
 Waiting for her lord returning from the ruined Trojan towers,
 Or that queen of all the ages round whose feet the deathless flowers
 Blossom in the Blessed Islands where Achilles calls my name,
 Wooing Helen for whose beauty Ilium withered into flame;
 Or my soul is all Athenian, like to hers who met her death
 For the sake of the sweet city, praising Zeus with maiden breath;
 Or my spirit floating southward over happy summer seas
 Answers to the wail of Sappho whispered through the Lesbian trees,
 Singing of the Gods forgotten and the stately faiths of old,
 And the limbs that dust has conquered and the altars that lie cold.

‘Yes, that is a dear poem, and expresses a great truth. In that divine land, blessed by a climate such as belonged to the Golden Age, the keen Grecian spirit solved this complex problem. For them, beauty of body and soul was essential, and the women who did not come up to that standard they treated as we would treat them: they ignored them, they put them aside. The real Greek woman is only to be found in those glorious beings who, like the Aspasia of Pericles, the Leontion of Epicurus, the Glycerium of Menander—if, indeed, the fair Glycerium be not a myth and no woman—or that lovely lady Laïs, whom the envy of women less beautiful pierced to death with needles in the temple of the goddess, and whose fate is a touching allegory of the lot of beauty in

this harsh world of ours. The others, the commonplace, the everyday and unimportant women, they kept shut away in their houses, aloof from that lovelier life of warm sunshine, of poetry and passion, of which we dream when we wander in spirit along the Street of Tripods, or lave in fancy our hot hands in the cool waters of the sacred Ilyssus.' Boiardo closed his eyes as if in reverie. He was evidently laving in fancy his hands in the sacred Ilyssus, and for a few seconds his friends forbore to interrupt his delightful dreams with speech. Then Heliogabalus Murdle spoke :

'What do you exactly mean, my dear Jack, by relations ?'

'Of course,' Jack replied, 'you will understand that when I use that term I have no thought of the conventional meaning of the word, of that clumsy method by which the world elaborates beforehand a series of unsought-for friendships. Against this, as against all conventions, I do battle. True relationship is that which exists between soul and soul. I myself am far more nearly related to the Venus of Milo, or to the Joconde, or to Hamlet, than I am to any of the persons who have the impertinence to call themselves my relatives. But our relations with beautiful women must always be swayed by love. What I wish to know is, Should we be led by art or by love ?'

'By art,' said the young painter. 'Art is far superior to love.'

'No,' said Theocritus ; 'love is the highest of all things. Love "that was first and last of all things made," as my great master says somewhere, is the only thing about which a serious human being should trouble himself, for art is begotten of love.'

'Nay,' said Boiardo, 'art and love are equal, the twin deities of our faith ; and in the service of a beautiful woman we adore both at once.'

'I have been moved to ask these questions,' said Jack, 'by the fantastic attitude which I understand some women are adopting towards us. There are, I believe, amongst them some curious creatures who are no longer content to be loved and sung by us, but are making strange demands for votes, and seats in Parliament, and the gratification of other unnatural aspirations.'

'Let us laugh down these hateful wishes,' said Boiardo, 'with the mighty laughter of Aristophanes and the delicate humour of Paul de Kock. A new Lysistrata, or a "Madame Pantalon," would bring these erring creatures back again to reason.'

'It is a melancholy thing,' said Theocritus, 'but it has happened before, and always at a time of national decay : when women came to sit in the senate of the eternal city, Rome fell.'

'But do real women, in our sense, take part in these eccentricities ?' asked Heliogabalus.

'Now, that is one of the points to which I was coming,' said Jack. 'Suppose a beautiful woman, whom one of us happened to love, took up these strange doctrines, should we be bound to follow?'

'I think so,' said Theocritus. 'It is my creed that one should do or sacrifice everything for the sake of a beautiful woman. I do not call the man a traitor who betrays his cause, or sells his city, for love's sake; I call him rather a hero, and, if he suffers for it, a martyr. A beautiful woman has the right to do and demand all, and it should be our glory to offer her the most servile obedience. It is a proud mission to sustain. There are, I am told, fools who pretend that, in the eyes of some abstraction styled justice, the old beggar at the corner has the same rights to life that she has. The thought is as horrible as it is absurd. I consider myself to be well worth a thousand such; and as for a beautiful woman, why, millions of the less favoured have no rights whatever compared with hers.'

'Well, we have established two great points,' said Jack. 'First, we have shown that to us at least it is needful that woman and beauty be synonymous. We have next arrived at the important conclusion that our only ethical system is to be drawn from the dictates of the beautiful being whom for the moment we adore!' He glanced round at his companions, who greeted his words with low murmurs of approval.

'The next point to be established,' said Jack, 'deals with our love itself, with an attempt to define its quality of pleasure or pain, and to give it its position in pure artistic existences. Accepting love as the guiding impulse of life, how many varieties of passion do we recognise? For example, if, impelled by that worship of beauty of which we are the high priests, we love, as we are bound to do, all beautiful women, we cannot offer to any one woman in particular an especial homage which would be most delightful to her. On the other hand, if we did lay ourselves at the feet, for a while, of one fair woman, we should be giving great pain to the others, whom for the instant we suffered to lie in oblivion.'

'It is a delicately metaphysical question,' said Boiardo, 'and one that would have puzzled the occupants of Garden or Academy, but it cannot long present any difficulties to us. Something might be done towards its solution, if each of us were now to lay down his theory of love. My idea of happiness is based upon a society with a class like that to which the glorious Aspasia belonged.'

'My ideal of life,' said Jack, 'is a succession of exquisite passions. Fidelity is merely an aphorism, to be interpreted by the

intellect of genius. Nothing is lasting, and it is for us ourselves to determine the duration at once of our lives and of our lyrics. Each perfect passion is like a perfect poem. The rhymes chime rightly in their appointed places, and the measure moves, mirthful or majestic, according to the will of the singer. But no poet keeps on singing the same song always, and why should we be asked to love the same love in sempiternal fashion? *Vivamus atque amemus*, by all means; but let us live and love often. The real business of life is art, and art is at its happiest when inspired by such fair and gracious emotion. I myself have loved often—very often—and I hold that I owe to it whatever height of humanity, whatever measure of majestic meaning, my life has yet attained to.'

A tremulous murmur of admiration went round the table. Theocritus whispered to himself, 'Beautiful! beautiful!' and Heliogabalus ran his hands through his hair with an air of plaintive sweetness.

'Don't think I am preaching to you the unæsthetic doctrines of infidelity. No. It is the artistic purpose to believe each love, while it lasts, to be eternal. It is upon this quality of concentration, as it were, this power of putting into the passion the pulsations of a life, the heart-throbs of a century, that true amorous happiness consists. Let us love as much as we can, but let us in each hour of passionate possession conceive our lives, our little lives, as bounded by that supreme moment, and the fair love-flowers of the enchanted garden. You must not imagine, however, that I underrate the long-drawn-out devotion of a Petrarch for his Laura. Such a thing is in itself supremely beautiful, for it is the creation of beautiful work, and the man who finds that one woman is able to afford him so much inspiration has no need to go farther afield. For myself, however, I should not find that so. I am like Ronsard, and demand many loves for the complete awakening of my lyric purpose. Have you ever observed,' Jack continued dreamily, 'how often we chance to meet in our daily life, say in some crowded street or secluded byway, in a theatre or in a foreign town, some one, some woman, for whom one feels that one could well endure a long and ardent passion? It is but the affair of an instant; like flashes of lightning across a summer sky. A face is seen, and sends a thrill of pain as the stirred blood rushes to heart and brows; then we turn the corner, or the curtain falls, and your lady of an instant is lost in the crowd, or you take your train and steam out of that foreign city, and see no more the face that has enchanted you. Yet, in that short space of time, how you have dreamed and hoped and suffered! Only five minutes, perhaps, in all, as men choose to

reckon time; but just as we may dream whole chronicles in a slumber of no longer space, so may a man live out a love-poem in the interval between the seeing and the losing of a lovely face. You look upon the face, upon the hair and unfamiliar eyes, that return, if at all they see you, your own impassioned glance with an unconscious indifference. You know she would not recognise you again if she were to meet you ten minutes later, and yet a little chance might have linked you both in closest and sweetest alliance, might have shown her a slave in the man she brushed against in passing. Had the hands but touched, why, then the lips that shall never meet had kissed indeed, and you would have known again the highest of pleasures in hearing your name uttered in kindness by the lips of a woman you love.'

'After all,' said Theocritus, 'why should we squander the few fair moments of our life in any vain pursuit of principles? It is, or it should be, enough for us to know that we are in love, without aimlessly enquiring why the thing is so. It is enough for us to be stirred to the depths of our soul by the sight of a fair face, by the music of a melodious voice, without pausing to ask the fruitless question, Why is my soul thus stirred? It is the duty of us, and of all like us, never to reflect at all. The seconds which we thus unprofitably waste are bestowing a greater grace upon some shapely form, are lending a tenderer and truer colour to the woods and the sacred streams, are imparting a sweeter tone to the speech of the woman we love, and are giving a more majestic meaning to the austere thunder of the sea. It is our business to live these seconds to the full, to let no throb of all their countless pulses be lost upon us; we must be testing, trying all things, with ever-increasing keenness. Our life is short, so let us make the most of it; for in the hands of the wise man it is like the tent in the Arabian story, which could be carried in the palm and yet expanded till it covered an army and a nation.'

Boiardo was here heard endeavouring to interpose some statement to the effect that the tale in question was not really Arabian and did not belong to the 'Thousand Nights and One Night' at all; but Theocritus paid him no heed and went mellifluously on.

'Every second brings us nearer to sunset; but while Phoibos Apollon still pursues his pageant, let us live well, grasping with both hands at all delightful passions that are brought near to us, taking quick delight in all the joys of sense, in rare colours, and sweet smells and sounds. Of all lovely things, a beautiful woman is the loveliest; and where she is, let us be happy and have no thought wherfor. I know well enough, alas! that she will cease to be beautiful, that formless old age will come upon her as upon

all besides; but when she ceases to be beautiful, the problem ceases too. All theories are fatal save only this, that to the few, the very few who have truly understood the meaning of beauty, all creeds and faiths and philosophies, all the mutterings of the wise men and the wailings of the crowd, are but as dust and emptiness, and that to us is entrusted the sceptre of supreme command. We must live and love like the honey-lipped Veronese, catching at all passions, drinking deep of all fountains, seeking after every emotion, letting no flower of the spring pass by us before the twilight comes and the appearance of the stars.'

Theocritus was silent; overcome by his emotion, he buried his head in his hands and remained so, while Boiardo indistinctly expressed himself as having heard something very like this somewhere before, though he could not at the moment remember where.

'Quite true and quite beautiful,' murmured Jack; 'you have expressed the need of the soul, that hunger after happiness to which the new Hellenism is the only answer. If we are resolved, as the great Greek poet was, to live in all beautiful and good things——'

'It was Goethe,' Boiardo sleepily interpolated; but Jack frowned and went on hurriedly,

'If we are resolved, I say, like the great poet, to live thus, we have in some measure answered our problem; for among the beautiful things of the earth women stand high, and therefore our attitude with regard to woman is in some measure interpreted and understood. In a truly Greek life we find our answer: our *αισθησις* is based upon that recognition of beauty which gave such serene splendour to the old Attic life; like the wise Athenians, we shut away from us, as in a mental gynaeceum, all that is unlovely, all that is hard or displeasing, and we build up again the beautiful Greek life which our friend has so eloquently regretted. We may think, with the Persian poet, if we could

Shape this sorry scheme of things entire,
Would we not shatter it to bits, and then
Remould it nearer to the heart's desire;

but if we cannot quite accomplish this, we can do much as regards ourselves by surrounding our lives alone with beauty. I think that Goethe has said somewhere that the man has lost a day who has not during its course gratified his nobler soul by looking on some beautiful picture or upon some lovely woman's face. That is, in short, my theory: I agree with Goethe, and he must therefore have been right. It is our fortune to enjoy and to interpret: to enjoy for ourselves all that can offer enjoyment in this world, and to interpret to others our own exquisite sense of pleasure. It

is a noble duty that is thus laid upon us, and we will fulfil it to the uttermost. My friends, I drink to it and to the sustaining power which guides us in our labours : drink ye, and as ye drink think of her whose bright presence for the moment fills your thoughts and occupies your dreams.' The four friends rose, four tall glasses were raised on high, met with a clash in mid-air, and were then drained dry as the four friends murmured in musical chorus the mighty words 'To Her.'

JUSTIN H. McCARTHY.

Francis Bret Harte.

It is constantly said that frontiers have ceased to exist, that oceans are bridged over, that steam and electricity have annihilated distance, and that every throb of the great human machine reverberates in both hemispheres. If this is true in matters political, financial, or commercial, how much more in the domain of imagination, science, and art!—for we hail with fresh interest every new effort, triumph, or discovery, irrespective of the accident of its birth. It is, therefore, no wonder that we Europeans instantly responded to the double attraction exercised by so gifted an author as Mr. Bret Harte, when in his writings he not only gratified our taste for the beautiful, but likewise that innate craving of every mind for new scenes, new characters, and new emotions.

Quite lately a new and complete edition of his works,¹ classified and revised by himself, has enabled the public to appreciate the fertility of his talent both as an author and a poet, and to judge of his labours as a whole; while until now they had only drifted to us in the shape of contributions to magazines or isolated volumes.

When, about fourteen years ago, the name of Bret Harte first became known in Europe, his reputation was made, and we accepted it without protest, although it burst upon us as suddenly as we are told it blossomed full-grown in his native land, the United States. In his literary career he seems to have met none of the discouraging rebuffs which so often chill the efforts of beginners; he did not linger with wavering and timid footsteps on the uphill road where so many slowly and tardily achieve success. The young author grasped his pen with no hesitating fingers, and before it was generally known that a new aspirant to literary honours had entered the lists, these honours were his, and he was proclaimed a master without ever having been a pupil. We do not mean to say that the critics did not fasten their fangs on some of his contributions, but they only added to his popularity by creating around his name that notoriety which is like the baptism of fire to the untried soldier. Through the whole of America and Europe his ‘Tales of the Argonauts,’ ‘Eastern Sketches,’ ‘National Poems,’ ‘Spanish Idylls,’ were favourably received and promptly translated. They brought to the *blasé* reader a fresh and racy element,

¹ The Complete Works of Bret Harte, collected and revised by the author. 5 vols. Chatto and Windus.)

impelling at the same time the conviction that truth lurked under those seemingly fantastic pictures of the Far West ; of those Californian shores which have been the dream of so many, the goal of a few ; the unknown land of golden hopes, of ardent ambitions, and too often, alas ! of deadly disappointment.

Bret Harte wrote of things he had seen, of men he had known ; wrote, as is so rarely done, of what he had felt or experienced. They cannot be all creatures of his imagination, those lawless miners, unscrupulous gamblers, hardy adventurers, or hungry emigrants, uniting the strongest powers of endurance, the most heroic fortitude, to the degrading passions of the brute and the sanguinary vindictiveness of bandits, who acknowledge no master, no law, no God. With a keen eye, a searching scrutiny, he seizes and retains every feature, every salient tone of the story he relates ; he paints the *mise en scène* in short but powerful and graphic sketches : a few words only, and before our mind's eye pass the desolate Sierra, the rushing torrent, the snowy peak, the dilapidated shanty, the dark and lonely road. . . . When the actors appear, they are living men and women, not puppets ; their mirth is riotous, their manners are rough, their passions fierce, but the warm blood courses through their veins, and now and then leaps to their brow. Whatever their failings, their vices, or their crimes, they always remain faithful to their nature and individuality, and move in perfect harmony with the surroundings in which they are framed.

It has been said that, judging Bret Harte from the majority of his writings, it may be gathered that he has on the whole a poor opinion of humanity ; that in his genius there is a satirical not to say cynical vein, which leads him ever to select for his subjects the *seamy side*, to dwell more on what is wrong than on what is right, and with disdainful impartiality to reserve alike his blame and his approval. We doubt it ; but should it be true, and should it be a fault, it would lay perhaps less in the judgment which he withholds, than in the nature of the society which he portrays, and to which he owes his unparalleled originality. His artistic tact tells him that there is a wider field for his peculiarly happy and genuine mode of expression, when his models are chosen from a time when men were untrammelled by opinion, when might was right, when the local colouring was crude and vivid, rather than from those later days when undaunted perseverance and rare energy had achieved the miraculously rapid transformation of California into a civilised community instead of a lawless gathering of gold-seekers, the scum of other nations united by the lust of the glittering dust, and ever divided by murderous thoughts

of greed and rapine. Who would blame Bret Harte for preferring the picturesque ruffian, the Spanish colonist, the wild Irishman, to the refined commonplace successors of those first explorers of the young country? He does not pretend, and does not care, to introduce them otherwise than as they really are; but then, he possesses the priceless gift of seeing the silver lining to the darkest cloud; he knows the 'open sesame' to locked hearts; he can win a smile from sullen lips, a glance from proud, defiant eyes; he can strike the spark of feeling even in the most degraded of human beings. If he does select his heroines from among the least favoured of their sex, plain to ugliness, uncouth, repellent, sinned against or sinning, crushed out of all semblance of what is loveable in woman—what matter? Out of some hidden source of kindness in his own heart he with subtle touch suddenly elicits an unexpected burst of devotion, self-sacrifice, love, or passion, which at once places the poor lost wretch on as high a moral ground as her more immaculate sisters. It is the same with his male characters. He takes the rudest life, the most lowering associations; he places in their midst a man devoid of moral sense or common honour, committing crimes without hesitation or remorse, and lo! that man also places his foot on the road of Damascus; a light bursts upon him—the touch of baby fingers, a woman's tears, a comrade's dying words—and with the same dogged listlessness, heaven alone counting the cost, he gives away his hopes or his life, perchance as unconscious of being a martyr and a hero as he was of having been an outlaw.

Have you seen Edwin Booth, the admirable American tragedian, the intelligent interpreter of Shakespeare, act King Lear? On the storm-beaten heath, warring alike with the elements and his own growing madness, the actor has a gesture of unspeakable pathos when, with what appears unconscious tenderness, he draws his royal cloak around the shivering form of the boy buffoon sobbing at his knee. It is the same spirit of innate, almost involuntary kindness which seems to prompt Bret Harte to claim—nay, to compel—our pity and our interests for the outcasts of civilisation, the bankrupts in happiness and virtue, disinherited from their cradle of all that makes life worth living.

In biographies of the American novelist it has been implied that he himself belonged to the wild race of adventurers he appears to know so well, and that, born on the lowest rungs of the social ladder, he rose by his own exertions to the position he now fills. It is, however, impossible to be acquainted with Mr. Bret Harte without being at once convinced of what is, indeed, the fact—that he comes from a good stock; that his early surroundings were

both intellectual and refined ; and that, whatever may have been the associates of his youth and manhood, he must as a child have learnt at a mother's knee those lessons of tact, gentle breeding, and perfect manners which can never be forgotten.

He did not enrich his country with the labours of his pen alone. During the troubled times of the War of Secession he served on the frontier, and later on was appointed Secretary of the Mint. His military career, though brief, was eminently successful. Amongst us he is deservedly liked and admired, and receives the same cordial reception in the circles where his literary and conversational powers are appreciated, as from those who in barrack or garrison hail him as a fellow soldier.

For a time he was Consul for the United States at Crefeld, near Dusseldorf ; he was not very long ago transferred in the same capacity to Glasgow, leaving many regrets and many friends behind him. There is little doubt, however, that he must soon be called to fill a more important post. In this short notice we do not dwell on facts so universally known as his busy Editorship of the *Overland Monthly*, and Professorship of *Belles Lettres* at the University of California. It seems almost presumptuous to give pre-eminence to any particular selection from among Bret Harte's works; still, we own to a preference for some of the shorter sketches and minor poems. Among the latter there are a few lines called 'What the Wolf really said to Little Red Riding Hood,' which are unrivalled for grace, simplicity, and delicacy of intention. It seems barely credible that the pen which wrote 'Relieving Guard,' 'What the Bullet Sang,' 'Fate,' with their stern, forcible, dramatic depth, could change to such idyllic tenderness.

'The Luck of Roaring Camp' is commonly called the most perfect of all the Californian tales. It truly deserves its world-wide popularity, but we confess to a partiality for two others equally rich in pathos, feeling, and humour, and which possess a strangely captivating charm : 'Tennessee's Partner,' the story of a love passing the love of woman, true unto death and beyond death; and 'The Outcasts of Poker Flat,' where two women who should never have met—one because so pure, the other because so lost—die in each other's arms, all unconscious of their great disparity, wrapped in the white icy mantle of snow which shrouds in its stainless embrace the innocence of the maiden and the shame of the fallen. Reading those tales, one cannot help wondering what the man who wrote them must have known himself of friendship and of pity. Next to these, will it ever be possible to forget 'Mliss,' 'Miggles,' 'The Rose of Tuolumne,' and many more which there is no space to mention ?

Is it not the highest triumph of the poet and the novelist, after having in turns moved you to laughter or to tears, to retain an imperishable hold on your memory? This triumph is Bret Harte's, and will remain his as long as he writes with his keen perception of truth, his shrewd humour, and that loyalty and tenderness of feeling which are so exclusively his own. He has at various times been compared with other authors—Dickens in England, Mérimée in France, &c. These parallels drawn between literary men, if flattering to one or both, are rarely correct, and more especially in this instance. Bret Harte stands quite alone on the ground he has chosen; his greatest claims to popularity are his individuality, his originality, his avoidance of beaten tracks and conventional grooves. His works are stamped with a hall-mark that distinguishes his sterling qualities from any others, and he has no more chosen to imitate any particular style than it will be possible for others to appropriate his.

The public of both continents is now impatiently awaiting a new volume from the gifted pen that has already given the world so rich an intellectual feast. The golden vein cannot be exhausted, the muse must not be silent, for it is more especially to the aristocracy of talent and genius that the motto applies, ‘Noblesse oblige.’

M. S. V. DE V.

A Heart's Problem.

BY CHARLES GIBBON.

CHAPTER IV.

IN A MIST

EARLY on the following morning Maurice received a letter from Colonel Cuthbert, stating that important business called him to London, and that he must therefore postpone their meeting until his return a few days hence.

Maurice was not sorry to find that he should have the day almost entirely to himself. The conversation with his father had disturbed him much, and he was anxious to think out the whole position alone. During the night he had come to the conclusion that, whatever he might try to do to satisfy his father, he could not give up Lucy. Then there had come to him brave resolutions to force the hand of fortune by sheer dogged work. Men had done it before under much more difficult circumstances, and surely he might do it too. There were other means of saving the estate besides the contemptible one of buying it back with a wife's portion. That he felt he could never do.

Vague schemes occupied his mind all the morning, but none of them took definite shape. He only knew that thinking of her he was strong and confident of success. He longed to have some token from her hand to show that she was thinking of him ; but he could not invent any excuse for writing to her without startling her by the deliberate declaration which he desired to make only when he was standing beside her. He was also anxious to let his father know the decision at which he had arrived, but delayed doing so in order that he might be able at the same time to lay before him some plan of action which might offer reasonable prospect of redeeming the property.

Mr. Calthorpe did not allude to the subject again : he took long walks and drives with his son, talking as if there never had been any breach between them, and discussing improvements of land and buildings with as much complacency as if his rent-roll were unencumbered.

At the end of a week Maurice proposed to go to London for a

few days. To this Mr. Calthorpe raised no objection, but asked him first to arrange certain matters about the drainage of the home farm. When that had been done, he discovered something else to detain Maurice ; and so it went on for another week.

Colonel Cuthbert returned to Hollyford and paid a hasty visit to his friends at Calthorpe. He had a private interview with Mr. Calthorpe, which apparently afforded that gentleman much pleasure. To Maurice the Colonel expressed his regret that he would not have the opportunity he had desired to cultivate his friendship, as he was leaving England on the following day, and would not return for at least a year. Without understanding why, Maurice felt as if he had lost an intimate friend, and the only one to whom he could have given his entire confidence regarding the matters which most disturbed him at present.

That night he wrote to Lucy. It was a brief note, simply asking if his room would be ready for him on the following Monday, and expressing a hope that everybody was quite well. A very cold and formal-looking note it appeared ; but the girl would have been sorry for him—or perhaps amused—if she had known how much it cost him to write in that apparently quiet manner. Every word was glowing with affection in his eyes ; the simple name was like a star shining upon him as it was slowly formed under his pen ; and to him the commonplace ‘yours faithfully’ had a meaning more intense than all the terms of endearment which the dictionary contained.

‘What a fool I am,’ he muttered, smiling at himself as he tenderly closed the envelope, ‘and how ridiculous she would think me if she could only read under the lines—would she?’

He even hesitated to post this missive of mighty import, but only for an instant : the desire to hold communication with her, however trifling, was now uncontrollable. He watched for the answer with painful eagerness and impatience.

Two days afterwards a box was brought from the station, addressed to ‘Maurice Esmond Calthorpe, ESQUIRE,’ in a large sprawling hand, the ‘Esquire’ being written in very large characters, as if to give it special prominence. The box contained the books and other articles which he had left at his Camberwell lodgings. There was no letter in the box or accompanying it to explain how his address had been discovered, or why the things had been forwarded.

Was this the answer to his note ? They had discovered his real name, and they were offended. The address had not been written by Lucy ; the feeble attempt at satire in the enlargement of the title ‘Esquire’ was evidently the production of the patriot

Teddy. If the latter had desired to keep Mr. Esmond away, he made a mistake.

On the following day Maurice drove up to the door of Dan O'Bryan's shop. The shutters were up, the door was locked, and a bill intimated that this convenient shop and house were to let. Maurice stood for a few moments looking in blank amazement at the tenantless dwelling; then he stepped into the greengrocer's next door, and sought information as to the whereabouts of the O'Bryans.

'They've gone away, sir,' answered a little stout woman with a florid, good-natured face, as she weighed out a pound of potatoes for a ragged, unwashed girl, who was glaring at the newcomer.

'When did they go?'

'About five days since,' said the woman; and then, looking at him with a shopkeeper's instinct, asked quickly, 'They ain't owing you anythink, are they? Oh, lor, of course not—I sees. You're the young man as had the first floor. I ought to have known that it was all square, because they was decent people, and paid up everything hon'able.'

'I have no doubt of that,' said Maurice hastily; 'but I am surprised that they should have gone away so suddenly. They had no thought of going when I saw them last, only three weeks ago. Did they leave any address?'

'No; they didn't say where they was goin' to, or what they was goin' to do. But Teddy—that was the son, you know, and always a queer chap he was—Teddy was lookin' mighty big, and talkin' about new gov'nors and new laws in a way that made one think he was fit for Bedlam. Bryan and his missus kept quiet, and I didn't see the gal Lucy—and a nice girl she was, sir, I says it—I didn't see her for I dunno how long (here's your taters, my dear).'

'And did Teddy give you no hint at all about where they were going to; did he speak of Ireland?'

'Now you mention it, sir, he did speak about Ireland and the rumpus that's goin' on there; and he spoke about Ameriky too. My belief is that it's Ameriky they were goin' to, but that's only my guess.'

Maurice was unable to obtain further information; even the potman at the Kentish Drovers, the tap-room of which was a favourite haunt of Teddy and his political conspirators, could tell him no more. He did not know any of the friends of the O'Bryans, and therefore his inquiries were brought to a dead stop when he had called upon the neighbouring tradespeople. Knowing O'Bryan's

enthusiasm for the cause of Ireland, and Teddy's wild notions as to the means of righting all her wrongs, he could quite believe that the old tailor and his family had gone to America on some Land League commission. He readily found an explanation of their silence to him in their discovery of the secret of his name.

He returned to Calthorpe. His father received him without any expression of surprise at his speedy reappearance, and in every way continued apparently to treat his comings and goings as ordinary matters of the day. He was, however, noting the changes in his son's mood with keen interest. He had seen the eager expression on his face when he started for London, correctly interpreted the gleam of hope that had been in his eyes when going, and half guessed the cause of the restlessness and depression which he displayed on his return. He was pleased to know that Maurice was in frequent communication with Arkwood, but he was mistaken in supposing that the subject of the correspondence was entirely legal.

Maurice had made Arkwood his confidant, and with his assistance had been endeavouring to trace the O'Bryans. He had endured some banter from his practical-minded friend as to the folly of thinking about love instead of law, but he had obtained the requisite assistance. The result was as futile as the inquiries he had made himself in Camberwell: he could learn nothing about Lucy. He still hoped that one of the family would write to him — perhaps she would answer his letter. Even that hope was dispelled when, after some time, the letter was returned, marked — 'Gone, not known where.'

There was a brief period of moody reflection: he wished that letter had not been returned; for then he might have understood that she wished to forget him, and vanity might have helped him to regard her memory with indifference. But whilst he knew that she was ignorant of his desire to be remembered, he would still be haunted by the craving to find her. In this humour he visited Arkwood, and that gentleman gave a prompt and decisive answer:

'There is only one way out of it, Calthorpe. Take chambers and get into harness. There is nothing like hard work for clearing the head of all the nonsense woman puts into it. Treat it like a cold, with plenty of mustard and hot water. Try my cure.'

Maurice did try it, without much success at first, beyond the satisfaction of knowing that he was gradually acquiring some respect amongst his friends in the Temple as a hard reader and an authority on precedents and decisions in the Rolls Court.

Arkwood dubbed him ‘The Temple Book of Reference,’ and his growing reputation obtained recognition in the direction most agreeable to him. At the end of a year he discovered that he had received fees amounting to nearly two hundred guineas, and that there had been days during which he had not thought of Lucy.

Her image came to him at intervals, but the face became more and more undefined as the mist of time thickened over it. Still, there were times when the glance of some passing face, or the sound of a soft low voice, would bring back to him all the old yearning to see her. How long ago it seemed to be since they had parted! Then he would wonder where she was, try to imagine what she might be doing at that moment, what she was like—something quite different from what he supposed, no doubt—and what would be their feelings towards each other if they were suddenly to meet. The memory was like that of a beautiful picture which one has seen in some out-of-the-way place long ago, and has no expectation of ever seeing again.

There was a quiet pleasure in dreaming about the bright face, and in trying to penetrate the mysteries of what might have happened had he found her after the reconciliation with his father. The thought of his father always recalled him from dreamland, and made him uneasily conscious of the lapse of time.

He had done very little so far towards the accomplishment of the object on which the old man’s heart was set; and the two years still remaining in which to accumulate the means wherewith to release the property were ridiculously inadequate for the purpose, calculating by his present rate of progress. Yet he was assured that, all things considered, his practice was very fair, and most promising. His father’s plan did not commend itself to him now any more than when first mooted, but he was compelled to admit that it was still the most feasible one apparent.

Mr. Calthorpe preserved silence on the subject. He saw that his son was favourably received in society, and believed that he might have paid his addresses to more than one woman of fortune with every prospect of acceptance. But he did not remind him by word or look of the day of reckoning which was drawing near, or of the means by which he expected it to be met—the means were to his mind the most convenient at command, and therefore the best. He found intense satisfaction in the belief that Maurice had given up the lady—whoever she might be—to whom he had referred when the subject of marriage had been mentioned. Had that not been the case, Mr. Calthorpe was too confident of his own acumen to imagine that he would have failed to detect the signs of a continued correspondence. As it was, the growing interest

evinced by Maurice in his profession afforded the best possible proof that there was no love affair distracting the barrister's mind.

So Mr. Calthorpe was content to allow matters to glide on in their own way, and was secretly proud of the skill with which he managed his son, as well as certain of ultimate triumph.

CHAPTER V.

THE DOPPEL-GÄNGER.

A BRIGHT spring morning. The sunlight attracted a thick haze from the earth, and thrust it aside as soon as it rose to form a bluish-cream background for the delicate pale green of the buds which gleamed on the hedgerows and the trees. The new vigour of the year inspired the toilers in the fields and by the waysides, and the sunlight made life glad.

Maurice felt light of heart as he walked at a brisk pace along the main avenue of the Earl's Park ; and when overtaken by his father, who was driving, declined to take a seat in the phaeton.

' You had better join me,' said Mr. Calthorpe, ' or you will miss the opportunity of being amongst the first to show neighbourly respect to the people at Hollyford.'

' What, has Cuthbert arrived ? '

' Yes, two days sooner than he expected. They have been travelling everywhere during the last eighteen months, and now they mean to settle down.'

' They ? Has he brought a wife with him, then ? '

' O dear no ; it is his daughter who is with him. I have never seen her, but the Colonel says she is everything he could desire his child to be—in which case she must be a paragon, for you know how careful he is of praise as well as of blame.'

' You seem to have made up your mind to think her so, at any rate, sir.'

' Well, yes ; I take his word for her goodness and beauty, and I know that she is an heiress—therefore I am ready to admire her,' answered Mr. Calthorpe frankly. ' I suppose you have no business of vital importance demanding your immediate attention, and so I do not see why you should deny Cuthbert the pleasure of seeing you—to say nothing of the pleasure to yourself of making the acquaintance of his daughter.'

' Very well,' was the laughing response, ' I shall go to see—the Colonel.'

He knew that his father would not have been so desperately eager about his introduction to Miss Cuthbert if she had not been

an only child and an heiress. Mr. Calthorpe smiled too, congratulating himself that he managed things admirably by openly acknowledging his interest in the Colonel's daughter. He was desirous that the young people should be brought together as early as possible under favourable conditions for each to make an agreeable impression on the other. There was no time like the present. She was fresh from foreign travel, probably her heart glowing with anticipations of the pleasures of her new home, and ready to like anything and anybody associated with it and with her father. Maurice was now apparently heart-free, and the strain he had lately put upon himself being relaxed, he would be susceptible to the charms of a handsome and intelligent woman. Frequent opportunities of meeting—which could be easily arranged without any appearance of ‘forcing’—would do the rest. The whole course was beautifully simple and clear to the strategical eyes of Mr. Calthorpe.

Maurice understood his father's calculations, and consequently the prospect of an introduction to Miss Cuthbert was not such a strong inducement to visit Hollyford as it ought to have been to him. But he wished to see the Colonel: and so he consoled himself with the reflection that he was not bound to become a wooer; and, besides, a woman might be lovable although she was an heiress, and a woman might love him although he was poor. He feared, however, that no such happy combination of circumstances would ever fall to his lot. Indeed, his position rendered it almost impossible; for the mere fact that a lady possessed a fortune reminded him too painfully that his attentions might be misinterpreted, and roused something like an unconscious prejudice against her.

Hollyford House was a plain, substantial-looking building, which had been the residence of a sturdy race of yeomen from the days of James I. There had been additions to the fabric, but the original portion remained unaltered. It had a good title to its name in the numerous holly-trees which lined the grounds, and in the ford near the entrance gate. The grounds had been greatly improved by the Colonel's predecessor—a misanthropical bachelor with a taste for landscape gardening—and presented many picturesque surprises of pathways leading through apparent wildernesses of untended shrubs and brushwood into carefully cultured flower-gardens. Nature had assisted art marvellously, and the artist had wisely allowed nature to have the best of it; so that the grounds of Hollyford had obtained a whole page of immortality in the local guide-book.

The Colonel had seen his friends approaching, and was at the

door to receive them—he had a liking for this old-fashioned act of courtesy. As he warmly shook hands with them, Maurice was struck by the change in his manner and appearance. The shadow of reserve which had been observable formerly was gone : the lines of his face seemed to be softened ; there was the light of happiness in his eyes and the spring of youth in his movements. Contrasted with his former self, he was like a man who, after long walking in darkness, finds himself once more in clear daylight, and is inexpressibly joyous.

‘Why, you have gone back a quarter of a century,’ exclaimed Mr. Calthorpe, with a look of complimentary envy. ‘Here is no staid leader of men, but the wild gallant, Frank, I knew—how long ago ?’

‘Upon my word, Calthorpe, I feel as if I had gone backwards,’ answered the Colonel, smiling. ‘I feel more youth in my veins now than I have felt for many a year. And I have good reason, as you shall both own when you come to know my daughter.’

‘You have so roused my curiosity regarding her, that my only regret in the near prospect of seeing her is that I am not a young fellow like Maurice there. Ah!—those days are gone ; but if she can only do half as much for me as she has done for you, I shall be grateful.’

‘She will be pleased to see you, at any rate ; for she regards you as an old friend—and I may say almost as much for your son. Your letters kept us so well-informed about your doings, that she said only the other day that she seemed to know you both. Come along ; she is in the library. I ought to tell you that she is very much inclined to be a blue-stocking, and it is hard work trying to keep her away from books.’

Maurice had been an interested listener to all this, and he had learned two things : first, that his father had been an unusually good correspondent ; and next, that Miss Cuthbert was a young lady of a serious turn of mind. The latter discovery was satisfactory, as there might be friendship without flirtation.

On entering the library, Maurice at the first glance thought it was unoccupied, but in response to the announcement made by the Colonel, ‘Here is Mr. Calthorpe, my dear, and here is his son,’ a lady stepped towards them from behind a screen. She laid the book she had been reading on the table, and advancing to Mr. Calthorpe, told him simply how pleased she was to meet her father’s old friend, of whom she had heard so much.

As Maurice was by inference included in this salutation, he ought to have said something in reply, but he only bowed, leaving all the talking to his father. There was, indeed, little necessity

for him to speak, as Mr. Calthorpe, beginning with the usual commonplaces, continued the conversation as if subjects of mutual interest were inexhaustible, and the lady was apparently pleased to listen. The Colonel, observing this, gave his attention chiefly to Maurice, and in his own gaiety of heart did not observe the curious abstraction in the latter's manner.

Maurice had a shy way of looking at women when first introduced, and as Miss Cuthbert's back was towards the window, he might have gone away without being able to tell whether she was well- or ill-favoured in looks, had not something in the tone of her voice struck his ear like a stray bar of some familiar melody which he could not at once completely recall. As he glanced at her occasionally something in her figure, too, reminded him of some one he had known. The dreamy wonder which these vague memories at first inspired rapidly developed into an eager desire to identify the voice and figure with those of that someone he seemed to have known long ago. His memory would not serve him; but every time Miss Cuthbert spoke or moved he became more convinced of her resemblance to an old friend. By-and-by her face was turned to the window; the sunlight fell full upon it. Then he understood.

If by any power of magic it had been possible to transform the pretty sempstress of Camberwell into the beautiful heiress of Hollyford, then it was Lucy who stood before him!

For a moment, indeed, he was so impressed by the resemblance, that he had almost spoken the name. He smiled at his own folly as he said to the Colonel:

'If your daughter has thought of us as old friends, I have discovered in her the most extraordinary likeness to a young lady I knew some time ago.'

'Indeed!—I hope that will make your acquaintance the more pleasant. I must tell her. Are you aware, Mabel, that you have a Doppel-gänger wandering about the world, and young Mr. Calthorpe has seen her?'

Miss Cuthbert smiled, as if much amused and interested, her clear soft eyes looking straight into those of Maurice.

'I have heard of people having doubles, Mr. Calthorpe, and have been told that I enjoy the privilege of having another self. You must tell me about her; I am curious to know what sort of person she is.'

However ridiculous the idea of associating Miss Cuthbert with Lucy might have been before, it became intensely so now, and he laughed again at himself; but underneath the laugh there was a deep yearning for the absent one. She seemed to be standing before him, with added graces and beauty, and yet she was so far

away! He had no difficulty now in distinguishing the two individualities; for whilst Miss Cuthbert seemed to be her exact counterpart, she had about her something that Lucy never could have had—the atmosphere of strangeness.

‘The resemblance is so remarkable, Miss Cuthbert, that I believe if my friend were beside you, and dressed in the same way, you would yourself fancy that you were looking in a mirror.’

‘You almost frighten me... I hope she is an agreeable lady—but perhaps I am too hasty: does she live?’

‘I believe so—I hope so,’ he said, with more warmth than he intended to display; then quietly: ‘but unfortunately I have not seen her for a long time.’

‘Nor heard about her?’ queried Miss Cuthbert with increasing interest.

‘Nor heard of her.’ His voice was low, and there was a dreamy look in his eyes; he was gazing at Miss Cuthbert and speaking to her, but it was Lucy he saw. ‘She belonged to a somewhat droll family; they suddenly left the place in which they lived when I knew them, and I have never obtained any clue to their whereabouts.’

‘I suppose you were not so deeply interested as to make particular inquiries about the fate of my double?—I warned you that I was curious.’

‘Oh, he knew the lady only for a very short time,’ broke in Mr. Calthorpe senior. He thought the conversation was trenching on dangerous ground, and was eager to interrupt it. ‘And he has been too busy to think much about the friends he refers to. You see, Miss Cuthbert, when we are out in the world we frequently meet people whom we should like to retain as friends, lose sight of them, and forget all about them until some slight incident or trifling resemblance reminds us that such people have existed. It is a very common experience.’

‘Of course, people must learn to forget,’ said Miss Cuthbert gaily, and with mock horror. ‘What a dreadful state of mind we should be in if we remembered everybody!’

At this there was one of those laughs which serve to fill up a gap in conversation if nothing else. Then Mr. Calthorpe, believing that he had effectually diverted Miss Cuthbert’s thoughts from the subject of Maurice’s lost friend, whose memory had so inopportunely obtruded itself, resolved to take a bolder step than he had meditated doing at this first interview. He suggested to the Colonel that they should leave the young people to entertain each other whilst they settled some business matters.

‘You are fond of books, I understand,’ said Maurice, when they were left alone.

'I cannot pretend to be much of a reader,' was the answer, with an air of indifference. 'To tell the truth, I like those books best which send me to sleep soonest.'

'Have you no favourite authors?'

'I cannot say that I have. I like a novel sometimes, but I cannot bear poetry or history, or any of those learned things that ladies are making such a fuss about just now, except in the way I have told you.'

Maurice was for a moment doubtful whether or not she was serious, and she laughed at his surprise as she went on :

'I am afraid you will think I have very bad taste, Mr. Calthorpe ; but you know we cannot all be book-worms. I like an active life—parties, dances, theatres, and any place where I can meet amusing people. And since I am making my confession, let me shock you still further—young as I am, I have learned to like a good dinner.'

'You are surely laughing at me, Miss Cuthbert,' said Maurice, more and more perplexed that one so like Lucy in person should be so unlike her in mind.

'Why should you think so? From your father's letters I know your tastes, and might easily have won your good opinion by pretending to care for things which are indifferent to me. But as my father has talked so much about you and Mr. Calthorpe that I know we shall meet frequently, I prefer to let you know at once what a very ordinary person I am.'

Maurice found the position extremely awkward ; under ordinary circumstances, he could easily have turned the conversation with one of the stock compliments which are at everybody's command. But he could *not* do this with her ; for be she as frivolous as she represented herself, and as indifferent to all intellectual pleasures as she pretended to be, there was still to him the halo of Lucy's memory surrounding her. That alone lifted her above ordinary women. There was evidently, too, a playful exaggeration in the account she gave of herself, which left him free to imagine anything he pleased about her.

Before they parted that day he had forgotten that she was an heiress.

Miss Cuthbert went to her own room. In a very deliberate way she placed her desk on a little table in the window recess, and seated herself before it. The window overlooked the most beautiful part of the grounds, and beyond was a long stretch of undulating country, like a huge map ; hedgerows, trees, and at long intervals houses, forming the lines and landmarks.

There was a curious expression on the girl's face as she gazed vacantly over the green meadows: it was one of sadness, which although subdued was still poignant enough to stir the heart with bitterness. Then there came a slight smile of pity, suggesting that all her suffering was vicarious. She took a pen and wrote:

' My poor Lucy,—You are not indeed forgotten, but you are remembered only as one of those whose acquaintance was very pleasant whilst it lasted, very nice to think about when accidentally recalled to mind, and nothing more.

' I have met the man; and if he is not already my lover, he is ready to become so on the slightest encouragement from me.

' You will say that this is cruel to you, as well as vain and presumptuous on my part. *I wish* to be cruel; and I am neither vain nor presumptuous in what I say. You have concealed nothing from me; I believe that you have laid bare your heart to me, and that I know its secrets as well as I know my own. *I wish* to be cruel, because *I wish* to teach you, if not to forget him, at least to cease to love him. How can I do that better than by proving to you how greatly you misunderstood the nature of his thoughts about you, and by showing you how foolish you were in giving to him such a love as I know yours to be?

' I own that he is good-looking, that he interests me, and that if I had not known your story he might have attracted more regard from me than anyone else I have yet met. But in my eyes everything likeable about him is destroyed by the reflection that, although he might speak readily enough to *me*, he discreetly controlled his tongue to you whilst making you believe he loved you. I do not blame you so much now as I did at one time for the mistake you made; but I shall never be able to tell you in words strong enough to convey my feeling of indignation at your folly in persisting in caring for him. Did he not come to you under a false name? Did he not in every way appear to think of you as his equal? Did he ever by word or look give you any warning that you should not love him? Did he not in everything except in absolute words give you reason to believe that he was coming back to openly declare his love?

' He deceived you. . . . Perhaps he deceived himself, and mistook a passing fancy for what you unhappily believed it to be. Perhaps I blame him too much, but I am writing just after our first meeting, and cannot help myself, thinking of you. . . . I shall write more by-and-by.

' I am quiet now, and can write with more ease. That does not mean that I intend to measure my words or deliberate upon

them. I would like to set them down just as they come to me, let them be ever so unkind or wicked.

' It was well that I was prepared to meet him, for the sight of one who was—I am afraid to think that it would be right to say *is*—so dear to you, tried me very much. But I did control myself and conceal my knowledge of the past. Of course he discovered my resemblance to you, and spoke of it. Had he seen me a few months ago, he would have discovered a still closer likeness; he might even have thought that I was the Lucy Smith he had known in Camberwell. But I have changed much even within the last few weeks. My father tells me that the colour is beginning to return to my face, and that he thinks I am getting stout! But the change which I notice most myself is a kind of hard feeling which I cannot quite understand; it makes me ready to be cruel, and especially to you. I feel that I want to hurt somebody. Except my father, I care for no one.

' I suppose it was this feeling which enabled me to be so cool when Mr. Esmond Calthorpe spoke to me; my self-possession blinded him completely. He had not the slightest idea that I knew anything regarding you, or what had passed between you. We talked about you—I, quite gaily; and he, just as anybody else would who was amused at the curiosity I showed in questioning him about his friend. I must own that sometimes there seemed to be a grave look in his eyes, and although they were staring straight at me, he did not seem to see me, but somebody *through* me. Twice this gave me a most uneasy sensation; but a slight laugh or a dull joke was enough to clear away that strange expression.

' Having found me your counterpart outwardly, he wanted to make out how far I resembled you in other ways. He asked me about books, and all the things he knew you were fond of; and I saw that he was shocked to find that our tastes were quite different. If I had humoured him in this respect, as I might easily have done, I do believe he never would have given another thought to you. Vanity, vanity, you will say, but I do not think it is. I shall know better when he comes again, and I know that he will come soon. He said that he wished to become my friend, and he was in earnest. Indeed, I cannot help owning that I liked the honest way in which he said this, without making any apologies for expressing such a wish when he had only seen me once. He will come soon.

' I thought I was quite calm, but I am still agitated. I do not know what is the matter with me, except that I am angry with you. Perhaps it may soothe you a little if I tell you that on

reflection I think there was an excess of harshness in the way in which I spoke of him when I began to write. It is possible that I have not made allowance enough for him. There may be something in his position which would explain all his neglect of you.

'Do not think that I am changing my mind. I may learn to pardon him, but I can never forgive him. That hard cruel feeling is very strong within me when I think of him.'

CHAPTER VI.

PHANTASIES.

MR. ARKWOOD allowed his cigar to go out. That was a remarkable circumstance, for he had a special respect for his cigar—it might almost be called a species of reverence; and when he sat down to smoke one he gave it his whole attention. He fondled it, as it were, between his fingers, watched that it burnt evenly, admired the graceful wreaths of the smoke as they ascended, dreamily inhaled its perfume, and allowed the flavour to linger in his mouth with the same relish as that experienced by an Epicurean wine-bibber in sipping his favourite vintage. The cause of his present phenomenal conduct was partly the contents of a sheet of blue foolscap which he held in his hand, and partly something relating to his companion who was seated opposite, apparently quite unconscious of having any share in disturbing his equanimity.

The scene was Arkwood's chambers in Fig-tree Court; time, afternoon; a substantial lunch over, and Arkwood and Maurice had settled down to give their digestion fair play.

'What in the name of heaven is this rubbish you have given me?' inquired Arkwood at length. 'I asked you for the precedents you were to find for me in the case of Howler and Growler, and you give me a paper on which the result of your researches appears to begin with the recondite question, "Is there any truth in Psychic Force?" And that is followed by the equally abstruse conundrum: "Can the same form exist vivified by a totally different soul?" This is not the first of April, Calthorpe, and I don't see why you should play a joke on me just now.'

Maurice flushed, looked very much put out, and made a feeble effort to put the matter aside with a laugh.

'An accident, Arkwood: that is a scrap of paper I was scribbling upon last night when I was mooning, and in my hurry when coming away this morning it must have got mixed up with your papers. Queer that it should be the first you took out.'

'Very,' was the dry response, thrusting the papers away and lighting another cigar. 'I wonder what would have happened to you if this had fallen into the hands of some decent, steady-going attorney.'

'Ruin, absolute ruin. I might then indeed have said farewell to law and the prospective woolsack.'

Arkwood was apparently resolved not to have his attention distracted from his second cigar ; but although he nursed it tenderly, it was evident that another subject had forced itself upon his thoughts, and was making a good fight for the entire control of them. He remained silent for a little while, Maurice smoking fast and swinging one foot carelessly, as if to show that the subject of Psychic Force and the possibility of other people's souls existing in other people's bodies had quite passed from his mind. At length, Arkwood, slowly :

'I had no intention of looking at the papers when I opened the packet just now. I only wanted to see if there was much for me to read. By the way, that is one of your failings, old fellow : you go in for too much detail. When this sheet came out, Good boy, thought I, he has made a *précis* for me, and it was rather startling to have such things as that flung in one's face.'

'Never mind it. You will find the rest all right !'

'I would not mind it, but laugh at the accident, and thank your stars that I was the only one who knew what an unmitigated fool you can be when you get into one of your mooning fits, as you call them. But you have bothered me a good deal lately, and this sets me thinking.'

'Nothing very dreadful, I hope' (still affecting to treat the matter lightly).

'I don't know. Some people may think softening of the brain of no consequence, as it is such a common malady nowadays ; but it's an awkward affair for a professional man, if people happen to find it out.'

'It is not so bad as that yet !' exclaimed Maurice, with a real laugh this time at Arkwood's serious manner.

'Well, you have been forcibly reminding me of the days when you were in such an unreasonable state about the girl you met in your Camberwell lodgings. In fact, you have been displaying all the marked symptoms of love-sickness in an exaggerated degree—you have a capacity for taking that thing very bad. I wonder why there is no compulsory vaccination act for the troublesome disease.'

'Because it is unnecessary, I suppose. I don't believe even you escaped calf-love.'

' Possibly not ; but you must have done so, and that accounts for the severity with which the cow-love attacks you. Come, make a clean breast of it : have you caught it again ? '

' No, not exactly.'

' That means desperately bad. There is so much of the hermit-crab style of gymnastics in this love business, that I have no doubt Miss Smith having jumped out of the shell your heart, some one else has jumped into it.'

' No, no other form has taken her place.'

Maurice rose, walked to the window, and looked through the dust-stained glass into the dull grey court, where the busy figures below seemed to his dreamy eyes like ghosts in a hurry.

' What then ? You may as well speak out, for I know that there is something in the wind. I helped you before, and may do it again with my sage counsel or scathing chaff as the case may demand.'

' I wish I could tell you, Arkwood, but I cannot realise the thing myself.'

' Have a shy at putting the case plainly to me, then, and maybe in the effort you will get at it yourself. I have often known a man who did not understand his case until he began to plead. Go on.'

After a pause, and without looking round, Maurice :

' You know Miss Cuthbert ? '

' Perfectly—that is to say, as perfectly as any man can expect to know a young lady of our day. The study is rarely an abstruse one. Let me see. I have taken her down to dinner several times, walked with her twice and waltzed with her once—opportunity enough to enable any man of average intelligence to understand any woman of ordinary mould. Sum total : she is very handsome, rather clever, cursed with a vulgar hankering after people with handles to their names, and decidedly fast. I don't think much of her ; but if she is the new goddess—well, she is a good bargain as girls go.'

' You do not understand her at all,' muttered Maurice, with an impatient twitch of the shoulders.

' And of course you do. That's a comfort, and I should like to have a sketch of her from your point of view, if she is the cause of your present disturbance.'

' There is no chance of my being able to tell you anything if you continue this banter. And yet I can scarcely ask you to be serious, for I know that the affair is so insane that, were it told to me about some one else, I too should chaff, or become alarmed for the health of my friend's wits. There ! we had better say

nothing more about it. Pass the claret. Are you engaged this evening ?'

' No, nor this afternoon : why ? '

' I was going to propose that we should go to the theatre, or somewhere.'

' We can arrange about that by-and-by,' said Arkwood quietly, rolling his cigar between his fingers. ' Meanwhile, we are to have this talk out, and you are to let me into the secret of your lunacy. You know that I can be serious when I know that you are in earnest, although I may consider your earnestness so much good nervous energy expended in a wrong direction.'

' Upon my word I believe it is,' exclaimed Maurice, with the air and tone of a man who is sorry for somebody he despairs of rescuing from an impending fate. ' But the whole thing is so real to me, and yet so vague, that it utterly bewilders me.'

' Begin at the beginning ; imagine yourself pleading for a client, and, never fear, you will come out of it clear enough.'

' It begins with Miss Cuthbert, then. What you have said of her is correct so far as regards one side of her character, and it is the side which she appears to think the best to show me. At times she does say and do things which I should consider fast if they were not said and done by her.'

' The eyes of a lover, you know, are famous for seeing beauty even in defects.'

' But there is the droll part of it—I am *not* her lover.'

' You have been a good deal at Hollyford during the last three months,' said Arkwood significantly.

' Yes, and am likely to be there as often during the next three months.'

' Which plainly shows that you care nothing at all about Miss Cuthbert.'

' You are bantering again. I am serious. I do care for her, but not in the way you think. We are friends, and there is no thought on either side of our becoming anything more. Yet I long to be in her presence as ardently as any lover could. Her voice is pleasing to me even when she is uttering the most ordinary phrases : her face and form are in my eyes perfection, and every gesture is full of grace.'

' Bravo ! A most friendly description of a lady by an ardent young gentleman who is not her lover. I should be inclined to say that my first opinion is correct—you are desperately smitten.'

' No, for whilst I am looking at her, it is not her I see ; whilst I am listening to her, it is not her voice I hear. Form and voice

belong to another ; only the thoughts belong to her, and I do not heed them.'

' You puzzle me ; and if it were not for your manner, I should fancy that you were joking. How can you have such a strong liking for her without regarding her with much deeper feelings than those of friendship ? '

' I knew you would take the usual view of the case. She is handsome and an heiress. I am poor, but eligible in some respects, and therefore want to marry her. I tell you no such thought has ever entered my mind. My feelings for her are those of a poor man who falls in love with a painting which he never dreams of possessing. Why I crave to be near her is because she is the living portrait of the one who still holds my heart.'

' Do you mean Lucy Smith ? '

' Yes ; all the time I am with Miss Cuthbert it is Lucy I am thinking about ; it is Lucy's hand which seems to touch mine ; and that alone gives her the power of fascination she possesses over me, and at the same time banishes every thought of any other relationship than that of a friend.'

' It seems to me that you are playing the part of a sort of modern Pygmalion, only you have found your Galatea ready-made of good flesh and bone, and I do not see how you can avoid transferring your affections from the absent one to her very substantial present shadow.'

' The two are very distinct in my own mind when I am not beside Miss Cuthbert ; but when I am beside her I can only distinguish Lucy, and yet I am somehow aware who it is I am addressing, so as to observe the necessary formalities. Can you solve the problem ? '

' No, it is much too hard a nut for me to crack,' said Arkwood, smiling quietly ; ' and I see it is not a case in which you require my assistance. You will find the answer yourself by marrying her some day.'

' Impossible,' was the decisive response.

' Nothing of the kind. You cannot go on loving a shadow in such a very pretty and substantial form as Miss Cuthbert—more especially if she happens to think about you at all.'

' There is no danger of that,' said Maurice, shrugging his shoulders ; ' for I have never felt myself so awkward in anyone's presence as in hers, and I know what a very poor figure I must cut in her eyes under such circumstances. But I do not wish to be otherwise.'

' Ex-act-ly ;' and Mr. Arkwood emphasised each syllable, looking at Maurice the while with a curious twinkle in his eyes.

‘ You do not wish it to be otherwise, and yet you have thought about it, or else you could not know that you did not wish it. The symptoms are very marked indeed.’

‘ You are mistaken, Arkwood; I am not deceiving myself in this matter, and when I become aware of any change in my feelings I shall certainly cease to visit Hollyford.’

‘ And what might she think of that?’

‘ She!—It never occurred to me that she would think about it at all. Probably she would be glad enough to have seen the last of a tiresome visitor.’

‘ But she does not think you tiresome; in fact, she is rather interested in you, and I know it, for she told me so herself.’

‘ The interest can be nothing more than that which she might take in anyone who was intimate with her father.’

‘ Something more than that, I am certain. Understand, I don’t say she’s in love with you; only that she is interested in you. She knew that you and I were a good deal together, and before I suspected that she had any special place in your thoughts the fact that she took every opportunity of questioning me about you set me a-thinking. She did it very cleverly, and without the least shade of mere inquisitiveness. Any one who had a kindly regard for you might have asked the same questions, and would have received the same answers; but any one would not have so persistently turned the conversation upon the same subject. I am not ambitious to shine as a talker, especially with women, but I cannot say that I felt flattered when I discovered that the only way to obtain her attention was to talk about you. My word for it, you have only to go in and conquer. There! I did not mean to say this to you, but nonsense begets nonsense, and so you have made me commit what might be almost called a breach of confidence. On my soul, you look so gloomy just now that I wonder such a bright, clear-sighted creature as she is, would bother her head for a moment about such a morbid, slow-witted fellow as you are.’

Maurice got up and paced the floor with a dull expression on his face and an inward look in his eyes. Presently he halted before Arkwood, who sat silently smoking and watching him.

‘ If I felt sure that your conviction was correct, I should feel satisfied that you had said enough to make me find reasons for an immediate journey to Jericho—that being the limbo to which troublesome people are usually consigned. But the trip will not be necessary, for I know that the lady has too much sense to care about me or to misunderstand me. And I cannot love her.’

‘ Prove it, then,’ said Arkwood.

'In any way you please.'

'The test is an easy one. We shall be together all the evening, we shall have no companions, and during the whole of the time you must not refer to this subject, and you must show me by your conduct that you are not thinking about it.'

'The first part of the test is easy enough; the second is somewhat difficult, for whilst my thoughts were formerly entirely of another, you have now given me cause to think about her.'

'I shall be lenient as to your thoughts, then; but I shall have no doubt as to the real state of the case if I catch you tripping in your speech. Now, then: that bargain is signed, sealed, and delivered. Let us take a walk.'

(To be continued.)

B E L G R A V I A

SEPTEMBER 1881.

Joseph's Coat.

BY DAVID CHRISTIE MURRAY.

CHAPTER XXV.

JOE had many things to think of, some about which to remodel his opinions. There was that Uncle George of his, who for so long had figured in his thoughts as a sort of wooden angel, and who now disproved his own desert of praise, and established himself as a quite melodramatic old rascal. It was hard for the returned wanderer to take the kindly, generous, stupid old Uncle George off his pedestal, and set up in his place the cunning, greedy, wicked figure he now began to know. And then Joe had felt himself a little aggrieved by Dinah's marriage, and he had used his grief as a set-off against his own misdoing ; whilst after all Dinah had been true, and his falsehood was multiplied a thousand thousand times. Uncle George had his share in that to answer for. For a while, when he began to think of it, Joe was resolved to have no mercy upon Uncle George, who really had been, within limits, a very wicked old man. But softening thoughts in a little time came to the prodigal's mind. He himself had more need of mercy than even that bowelless old man. Joe had never thought much of George's head, though he had revered his heart, and it began now to seem natural to him that his uncle should have gone wrong under great temptation. And surely the sudden temptation to keep so vast a sum as that which drew on old George was a difficult thing to resist.

'Should I have come home ?' Joe asked himself. 'Should I have behaved better if Uncle George had never told that lie about Dinah ? The news that I owned the money might have brought me home again, but the thought of Dinah failed to do it.'

He did himself less than justice, as was natural, and was hard upon himself in his own thoughts, as he had a right to be.

More than the hour or two he had specified to John Keen had gone by. It was nearly midnight, and he still sate absorbed in his own thoughts and memories, when the young lawyer ventured back again and knocked at his bedroom door. Joe appeared in the doorway with troubled face and disordered hair.

'It is getting late,' said John. 'Sir Sydney Cheston would be glad to see you.'

'Very well,' said Joe, coming out upon the corridor.

John led the way to the private room in which Cheston and he had spent the evening, and when the baronet saw his old chum's face he arose in solicitude, and crossed the chamber to meet him.

'This has been bad news, Bushell,' he said as he took Joe's hand. 'I have been telling Keen here that there must have been some powerful motive at work to keep you away all these years. I shan't press you to reveal it.'

'There was only one thing,' Joe answered. 'My uncle wrote to me telling me that my wife had married two years after I left home, and I couldn't come back after that, you know. I lived in that belief until I met your brother George by chance in New York, and he told me the truth.'

'What is this?' cried Cheston;—'this about a brother of mine? I never had a brother George!'

'What?' asked Joe in amazement. 'He said he was your brother. He said your father married again. Here,' cried Joe excitedly, pulling out his pocket-book, 'here is his card.'

Sir Sydney took the proffered card, and read—

'Mr. George Cheston, Worley Hall, Staffordshire.'

'This is a queer start,' said the bewildered reader, staring strickenly at Joe; 'whilst Joe, with as much surprise, stared back at him. 'What was he like?'

'You got his letter?' asked Joe. 'I saw him write it, and I sent my own servant to the post with it.'

'I got a letter,' returned Cheston, 'but who the dickens wrote it is more than I know, and more than I can guess.'

Joe suddenly seized Cheston by the arm.

'Was the news he gave me about Dinah—about my wife—was that true?'

'What news?' demanded Cheston.

'That she had never married again.'

'Yes. That was true. I've known her ever since you went away—ever since the day you knocked me down about her.'

The matter was not so serious to Cheston as it was to Joe, and

the good-natured baronet could afford an amused smile to that remembrance. Joe sat down, his brown beard crushed against his breast, and stared at the fire.

'It is easy enough,' said Cheston, laying a hand on Joe's shoulder, 'to see why old Bushell wrote that lie to you. I'm afraid that respectable old party has been a bad lot all along. Did he know of your marriage?'

'No,' the other answered. 'He couldn't even guess it. He might have seen from my asking after her in my letters that I was fond of her,' he added simply.

'And invented the tale to prevent you from coming back again to look after her? Perhaps, Mr. Keen,' said Cheston, turning round, 'the devil is less black than he is painted.'

John nodded, but said nothing. He had learned the story of Joe's departure, partly from Dinah, and partly from Cheston, and he began to be able to see that the runaway was not necessarily a hardened villain to begin with; at least, he seemed properly sensible of his wickedness and folly now, and he was in terrible trouble through it all. John could scarcely maintain his hold upon that angry scorn which he desired to feel. He confessed that, howsoever deserved the bitterness might be, the wanderer had a bitter home-coming.

'Who *the* devil,' Cheston broke out after a little silence, 'could that fellow have been who gave you this confounded card?'

'I don't know,' said Joe wearily. 'I met him at an hotel. He used to talk about dear old Syd., and he knew my Uncle George, and—and Dinah, and old Banks. He came back with me as far as Liverpool, and then he bolted. Why, I've got his luggage here now!' he cried, suddenly recalling that fact. 'It has his name painted on it. Two portmanteaus and a big chest. He was a good-looking fellow, and if he wasn't a gentleman he was a very good imitation of one. There was no humbug about his knowing the country-side, any way.'

'And did he talk about me?' asked Cheston.

'Of course,' Joe answered. 'When I first heard him speaking, he was asking some young Englishmen to pay him a visit at his place at home—Worley Hall, in Staffordshire. It was that which made me speak to him.'

'I shall be glad to welcome any friends of his,' said Sir Sydney, somewhat grimly—'deuced glad. I shall be glad to welcome him, if he should call—with a horsewhip!'

'Cheston,' said Joe, rising and pacing up and down the room, 'this is all trivial, and we can talk about it afterwards to our hearts' content. Advise me. What am I to do?' Digitized by Google

'About young Banks ?'

'About my son ! Yes.'

'Keen tells me,' said Cheston, 'that you said something about obtaining a mitigation of the sentence, and compelling your uncle to join in the appeal. There's something in that. You don't doubt the story of his relationship to you ?'

Doubt Dinah ? No. That was beyond him. He had no doubt of Dinah ; but he looked at John Keen.

'I think the thing,' said John, 'as clear as day. I would as leave doubt my own senses as Miss Banks—as Mrs. Joseph Bushell.'

'If the boy is hers,' said Joe, 'the boy is mine.'

'Do you intend to return to her ?' asked Cheston.

'Great heaven, Cheston !' Joe exclaimed. 'What can you think me ? Go back to her now, after leaving her alone and broken-hearted all these years ! Go back to her, and give her the extra misery of knowing that I was alive all this time ! No. I'm not the man she loved and married. No. She wouldn't know me if she saw me. Give her definite news that I'm dead, and let me find this unhappy lad of mine and take him away with me back to the West, and teach him to be honest, and leave him enough to keep him so. I can do that much good at last, perhaps.'

He spoke with difficulty, but in so simple and direct a way, and with a repentance and mournfulness so real and apparent, that for a minute they left him unanswered.

'His mother,' said John after this pause, 'would not be content to lose him so. At least, I think not.'

'It's a terrible business, Bushell,' said Cheston, laying both his hands on Joe's shoulders. 'Make the best of it. Go back to your wife, declare yourself, promise to do the best you can for the lad—make whatever atonement for your past mistakes you can.'

'No,' the prodigal answered, 'I can't do that. I can't be so mean as to go back again and offer her the mere fag-end of a life. No, no !'

'Fag-end of life be hanged !' cried Cheston. 'I'm a young fellow yet, and we're of an age within a month or two. You've happy years before you, man alive ! Do your duty, Joe, and earn 'em, and have 'em and enjoy 'em !'

'You don't understand,' said Joe, returning Cheston's friendly gaze mournfully. 'I couldn't quite tell you myself what brought me over, but I know what I want now.'

'What do you want ?'

'To spare her all I can. Everybody has believed me dead for years. It would only bring her a new trouble to know that I was alive.'

'Suppose that, believing you dead, she should be induced to marry again! Eh? And suppose that when the step was taken any accident should reveal the fact that you were still living? Would that be sparing her?'

'Don't urge me now,' said Joe hesitatingly. 'Give me time to think. And think for me. I am only certain of one thing. Whatever seems best for her comfort and peace of mind I shall try to do.'

There was no doubting that he meant this, and Cheston was compelled for the time to let the subject fall.

'And now,' Joe resumed, 'I can go to-morrow to my Uncle George, and frighten him into making enough over to Dinah to satisfy her heart's best wishes—if money could do it.'

'I am afraid that if he saw you just at present the shock would kill him,' said John Keen.

'What *can* we do?' Joe cried. 'Does my boy know who he is yet?'

'No,' from both of them.

'I'll go and see him,' said Joe, forcing himself against an awful inward terror and reluctance. 'We can appeal to the Government to mitigate his sentence. You'll help me, Cheston?'

'I don't think I'd try to see him at first,' urged Sir Sydney. 'I'll help you any way I can with all my heart and all my might. We might appeal, though there were circumstances—— Yes; we might appeal.'

'What circumstances? There was nothing—worse than I know?'

'Well,' said Cheston reluctantly, 'his defence was his worst condemnation, Bushell, and that's a fact. He swore it was all a plot to ruin him, and he gave his sweetheart a part of the money in bank-notes, and when she came into the box he sung out that she was in the plot with the rest, and the poor girl fainted. It made people angry, you know, and it increased the prejudice against him.'

At this renewal of his memories the baronet walked abruptly to the other end of the room, and there, under his breath, he let out a curse against the criminal, and then returned. Joe stood dejectedly looking at the floor.

'What can we do?' he asked again. 'Has anybody seen him since——?'

'No,' said John, 'I think not. Old Daniel—his grandfather—was so cut up by it that he sold the Saracen and went away to Wrethedale. I had some trouble,' he continued, with something of the old hang-dog air upon him, 'in finding out where he had

gone, for he communicated with nobody, and left the place quite suddenly.'

'Cheston,' said Joe doggedly, 'I shall go and see him. It's clear he has been a scoundrel; so have I: and there's a pair of us. Like father, like son. If I'd have stayed at home and done my duty he'd never have been tempted.' John recalled Dinah's words, for Joe was thinking Dinah's thoughts. 'I'll begin to do my duty now, please God!' Joe said humbly, 'and I'll go and see him to-morrow. You're a magistrate, Cheston. How can I set about it?'

'I can help you if you are bent upon it,' said his old companion. 'I am a visiting justice for the county. Shall I go with you?'

'Will you?' asked Joe. 'Thank you.'

They all fell into silence, until after a long pause John arose and said good-night. Sir Sydney at this arose also.

'You'll want to be alone a little while, Joe? Eh?'

'Yes,' said Joe. 'I shall see you again, Mr. Keen. You will keep my confidence in the mean time until it is decided what to do.'

'Certainly,' John replied, and went his way, his old prejudices against Joe Bushell and his new prejudices in his favour fighting each other.

'You're set on going to-morrow, Bushell?' asked Cheston.

'Yes. You'll come with me?'

'If you wish it.'

'I do wish it.'

'I will come. Good-night.'

'Good-night.'

Joe was alone again with his own thoughts. Ah!—in his case too—to have seen to-day with to-morrow's eyes! There is no wisdom like that. But which of us has it? If he could have foreseen! But he had at least begun to learn in these late days the one lesson which in itself comprises most human wisdom worth the having—and that is, that in any complexity and all complexities of human life the thing to do is not that which looks easiest or most clever, but that which is most honest. Patiently to find out the right thing to do, and then to do it, seemed all the hope left him in the world. And there are some of us who go along in high feather who have hopes less bright than this.

It seemed to the home-coming prodigal's conscience the clearest of duties to see this unknown fallen son of his without delay, and without delay to set to work for his amendment. He lay awake planning for this newly-found child, whom he had never seen and who was a felon. He wept awful tears about him and

the hapless mother so long deserted. Whatever he had suffered in the past—and remorse had for many a year been busy with him—was nothing to this last punishment, and the healing but terrible fire of it lay in this—that he who had most deserved to suffer had suffered nothing.

'I have wired,' said Cheston, when he met Joe in the morning, 'to say to the governor that I am leaving here by the 10.15, and that I particularly desire to see him. I have asked him to meet me at the railway station. He knows me very well, and I have no doubt he will oblige me by coming.'

Joe said 'Thank you,' and no more.

They breakfasted in silence, and in silence set out upon their journey. Cheston read the 'Times,' and Joe communed with his own thoughts. The baronet's surmise was right, and the governor of the gaol was at the station to meet the train.

'I am immensely obliged to you,' said Cheston, shaking him by the hand with hearty cordiality. 'Will you walk up with us?'

'We are all happy to oblige Sir Sydney Cheston,' said the governor.

'This is my friend Mr. Bushell,' said Cheston. The governor bowed and made way for the two to pass through the station door. Cheston, drawing one arm through the governor's and another through Joe's, went on: 'We are deeply interested in one of the prisoners under your charge, one George Banks.'

'George Banks,' said the governor, 'is not under my charge any longer, Sir Sydney.'

'How's that?' asked Cheston, stopping short in his walk.

'Well,' said the official smilingly, 'I suppose your interest is a friendly one?'

'It is assuredly,' Joe answered.

'In that case you will be pleased to hear that his sentence was some time ago commuted by the influence of a most warm-hearted friend, who exerted himself with the Secretary for the Home Department, procured the young fellow's release, and sent him out to Melbourne.'

The two friends standing in the roadway with the governor between them looked across at each other in amazement, and the governor himself, naturally pleased to have produced such an effect so easily, smiled as he gazed from one to the other. Cheston was the first to recover.

'Who was the benefactor?'

'Well, Sir Sydney,' returned the governor, still smiling, 'but that I am forbid to tell the secrets of my prison-house, I could a tale unfold. Ha! ha! ha!' He was again naturally pleased at

having fallen on so apt a quotation. ‘The fact is,’ he added, ‘that I am in a measure bound to reticence. The young man’s friend was one of those people—very rare in my experience—who do good by stealth and blush to find it fame.’ The governor was again delighted with himself at having found so apt a quotation, and again he showed it. ‘He asked me,’ continued the smiling official, ‘in terms which I can scarcely disregard, not to reveal his share in that meritorious enterprise. I believe, gentlemen, that for once I have seen a practical Christian, and that practical Christian was the man whose influence released young Banks from prison.’

He spoke with pleased warmth upon this topic; but looking from Joe’s face to Sir Sydney’s, and from Sir Sydney’s face to Joe’s, he read no answering smile.

‘I assure you, sir,’ said Joe, with a gravity before which the governor’s smile died away, ‘and Sir Sydney Cheston will assure you, that we are here upon an enterprise of no common importance. It is vital to me to know this young man’s whereabouts. If you will give me the name of the man who did this good deed, I pledge you my word of honour that I can and will exculpate you to him, and could and would if you had been sworn to secrecy a hundred times.’

‘I don’t think it is possible,’ said Cheston, ‘to exaggerate the importance of my friend’s request either as regards himself or young Banks. Melbourne’s a wide world. The young fellow may have gone anywhere from Melbourne, and we might chase him in vain for years.’

‘It can injure nobody,’ Joe broke in again, ‘to let me know who has anticipated me. My purpose,’ he added, ‘in coming here was to set afoot a plan for the mitigation of his sentence. Will you help me to find him?’

‘It’s for the young fellow’s good,’ chimed in Sir Sydney; and between the two the governor hauled down the flag of resistance, and in the act struck the pair dumb.

‘Well, gentlemen, under the circumstances, I suppose I am justified; at least, I feel so. The gentleman who procured young Banks’s release, who fitted him out for the world anew, who gave him a free passage to Melbourne and two hundred pounds to begin the world again with, was—’ he paused to give effect to his announcement—‘his original prosecutor, Mr. George Bushell.’

To say that his hearers were astonished is to say nothing. The governor had intended a surprise, but seeing dimly that the effect he had produced multiplied his hopes by a million or thereabouts, he also became amazed, as a man might who suddenly

closing a door to startle you should find that he had slammed the house down. Cheston and Joe could only stare in blank wonder, and the governor, discomfited without knowing why, looked helplessly from one to the other. At last Cheston burst into almost hysterical laughter, stamping to and fro about the street.

'I beg your pardon,' he gasped after a minute or two, holding Joe's arm and looking at him through tears of laughter. 'I wouldn't wound you, Joe ; I couldn't help it.'

'The villain !' cried Joe, finding his tongue.

'The amazing old serpent !' said Cheston, gasping still. 'Machiavelli was a fool to him.'

CHAPTER XXVI.

OLD GEORGE, propped up with pillows, sat in a big armchair in that room in which young George had once upon a time signed his own name without knowing it. His face was pallid and puffy, his lips had fallen to a vacuous looseness, and his eyes were dull and fish-like. His white hands wandered feebly about the rug which lay over his knees, and his whole look was that of a broken man. His housekeeper stood by him with jelly in a tea-cup, and fed him with a spoon until the old man turned his head away like a fretful baby.

'Tek a bit more, master,' said the housekeeper.

'Is theer anythin' wrong with it ?' asked old George, moving his lips, with a doubtful air. 'I've been a good master to you, Mrs. Bullus, this many 'ears. I don't think you'd do me harm now.'

'Law bless you, master, how yo' do talk,' said Mrs. Bullus. 'Tek your vittles like a sensible old man, now. Do! Theer, that's right. Why, it's the very best o' cawves'-foot jelly, as I made myself.'

She smacked her lips with a relishing air, and old George again consented to be fed. The last spoonful had been just administered, when there came a knock at the front door, and the housekeeper, hastening to answer it, dropped a series of bobbing curtseys.

'Good morning,' said Sir Sydney Cheston, in tones subdued from those he commonly used. 'How is your master ?'

'He's mendin', sir,' returned the housekeeper, still bobbing at the baronet, as though the sight of him set an uncontrollable spring in motion ; 'but his poor yed's bad, an' he seems a bit childish-like.'

'Do you think he'd know me?' asked Sir Sydney. 'Would it do him any harm to see me?'

'Oh, he seems to know folks just as well as ever, sir,' said the housekeeper; 'but please speak very quiet to him, sir. . . He's all o'er nerves, like.'

'Yes, I will,' answered Cheston, entering on tiptoe. 'This the room? Thank you.' He advanced gently towards the patient and sat down beside him. 'Well, Mr. Bushell, you're getting better, eh?' George looked at him vaguely. There was no speculation in the orbs that he did glare withal. 'You know me, don't you?'

'How d'ye do, sir?' said the patient, nodding at him feebly.

'You know *me*?' his visitor repeated, tapping himself on the waistcoat with a forefinger—'Sir Sydney Cheston, you know, eh?'

The old man again nodded feebly, and chuckled with exceeding faintness.

'I've rode,' he answered, 'along of a baronet afore to-day.'

'So you have, Bushell,' said Cheston, 'so you have.' He surveyed the old man with much discomfiture; but whilst he did so George's eyes lit up a little, and he put out a shaking hand.

'I'm proud to see you here, Sir Sydney,' he quavered.

'That's well, that's well,' said Cheston, shaking hands with him. 'You're getting better, eh? You'll be able to see to business again by-and-by, eh?'

'In a day or two—in a day or two,' quavered old George; but to his visitor's mind it looked unlikely. 'I'm proud to see you here,' the patient repeated, 'but I've allays been well thought on by the local nobility an' gentry, an' I'll tell you why. I've knowed my station, an' I've been a man as allays tried to do my dooty.'

'Yes, yes,' Cheston answered, with outward heartiness, and at this juncture the doctor arrived. After a brief examination of the patient he retired, taking Sir Sydney with him.

'What do you think of the case, doctor?'

'Well, Sir Sydney, it's a case of considerable difficulty. Sometimes I think he may recover mental soundness as well as bodily health, and sometimes I think he may not. We must leave all that to time.'

'You think he may recover bodily health?' asked Cheston.

'Yes,' said the other. 'He is in a fair way; but his mental strength returns slowly, and he has relapses.'

'Um!' said Cheston, standing beside the doctor's carriage. 'Look here! I've some very particular and important business with him.'

'Impossible to attend to it, Sir Sydney, I assure you, for weeks to come, at least.'

'Very well, then,' said Sir Sydney; 'I won't allude to it for weeks to come. I won't allude to it until you give me leave, but what I want to ask is this:—Will it facilitate matters if I call on him now and then, and let him get used to me before I broach what I have to say to him? Now, I've given you my word that I won't hint at the thing until you give me leave.'

'I beg your pardon, Sir Sydney,' said the doctor, turning with a foot on the carriage step, 'but has the business anything to do with that which gave him the first shock? Do you know?'

'It is the same,' replied Cheston; 'but he doesn't associate me with it. *Entre nous*, it's a great deal more important than his getting better can be to anybody; but unluckily it can't be done without his getting better.'

He left the doctor to think over that enigma, and went back to the hotel in Birmingham to join Joe Bushell and John Keen. His visit to old George had come about as the result of a consultation, and he had been fixed upon to spy out the condition of affairs for reasons plain enough. A return of the long-lost nephew might have killed the old rogue outright, and John Keen's presence was but too likely to upset him again, whilst no suspicion could attach to a visit from the baronet. Cheston gave his news.

'It's no use starting on a wild-goose chase to Melbourne,' said Joe. 'We can see the old man's hand too plainly now to think of that.'

'Why?' asked John Keen.

'Don't you see that my uncle's object was to get the boy out of the way? Do you think he would be likely to tell the governor of the gaol the real place to which he persuaded him to go?'

'What shall you do?' asked Cheston.

'What can I do?' returned Joe. 'There is nothing to do but to wait.'

'And where shall you wait?' his friend demanded. 'Come and stay with me.'

'No,' returned the exile; 'I don't want to be known. I'll stay where I am at present, and lie close.'

The baronet pressed him, but he would not yield, and at last he confessed his purpose.

'The fact is, I'm trying to make my mind up to go to Wrethe-dale and——' He broke down, and turned away; but recovering himself in a moment, he addressed John: 'I suppose there's an hotel there?'

'Yes,' said John.

'We might make a casual acquaintance when I get there, Mr. Keen, if you don't mind,' said Joe; 'but I should be glad if you wouldn't know me just at first. I am surrounded by difficulties. Let me know what to do before I act decisively. You will do your best for me here, I know, Cheston.'

'Rely on that,' his friend answered, with a firm shake-hands, and after a little further talk they parted. Sir Sydney was to watch old George, and to report on his fitness for approach when the time came. The report was to be made to the lawyer, and not to Joe, who was to figure in Wrethedale as an idle stranger until he could decide upon his own line of action, or events decided for him. Cheston went home, and in the evening the young lawyer and the returned wanderer took train together.

'Mr. Keen,' said Joe, as they sat alone in the railway carriage, 'on my own best showing you have no reason to think well of me, but I want you to be my friend. You see my wife sometimes?'

'Yes,' said John. 'I have known her all my life.'

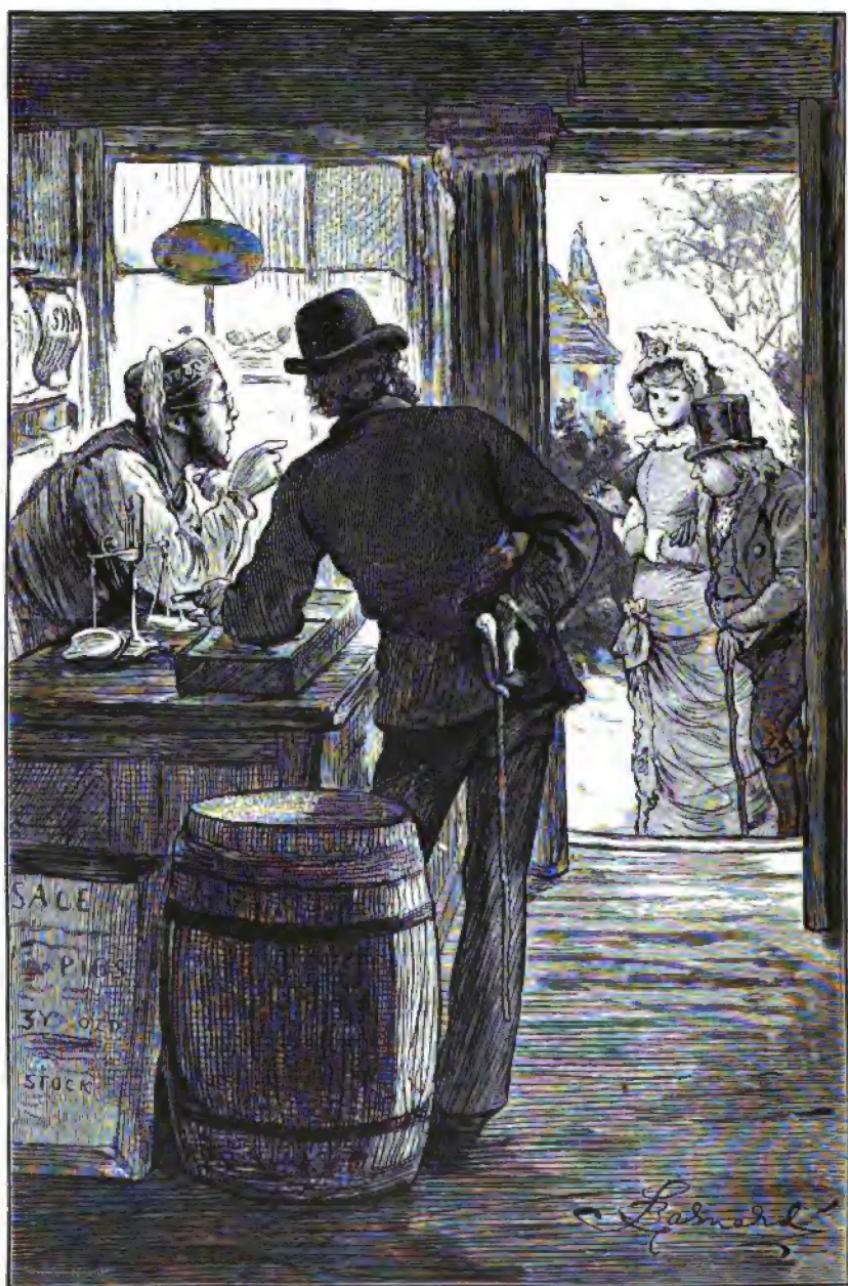
'Did she strike you as a happy woman before this trouble came?' poor Joe asked.

'No,' said John. 'She always seemed to me, even when I was a lad, a woman who had seen trouble. She never complained of anything, but there was always a sort of gentle sadness about her.'

Joe nodded sorrowfully and fell a-thinking.

Wherever this wanderer had gone, men had somehow liked him and believed in him. His handsome face, the saddened good-fellowship of his look, his ways genial and gentle, had enlisted the hearts of men and of women. John felt tempted to like him, but had reason for not yielding him friendship on a sudden. Yet it was indisputable that the sternness with which he had thought of Joe from the time at which he had first heard of him had vanished. He blamed, but he pitied as much as he blamed. He felt impelled to a liking which might be larger than his pity. It had seemed natural to picture the lost husband as an altogether empty and self-satisfied creature, who, having gratified the freak of a month, was willing to go away and let a woman suffer for his sake for a lifetime; but it was not easy to believe in that picture in the presence of the original it libelled.

The two reached Wrethedale, and by mutual consent parted like strangers on the platform. Joe had packed but a small portmanteau for the journey, and, taking this in hand, he walked into the main street of the old-fashioned town, and cast about for a place to stay in. In a little time he chanced upon an inn, and entering, demanded supper and a bed. He sent the meal away almost untouched, and rambled about the streets, looking up at the lights in



'That's an old fellow, now.' digitized by Google

the houses, and wondering whether Dinah lived in this house or in that. He roamed till bedtime through the quiet ways of the town, scarcely meeting a human creature. When he slept it was to dream all night of things that had happened years ago, and in his dreams at least the time from his leaving England until his return was blotted out, and he was young again.

After breakfast next morning he rambled out with a cigar in his mouth, and was conscious of the fact that he created a sensation in the rear of many curtained windows. There were not many people in the street, but as he sauntered slowly on he was aware of an old, old man, with spindle legs and a rotund waistcoat, who pottered along the cobbled footway, supported on one side by a handsome young woman, and on the other by a walking-stick. The old fellow looked up at stalwart Joe as he went by, and the idle stranger made a guess at his identity. Feigning to check himself in his walk as if he had just remembered something, Joe turned back and passed the pair with a lively step, without looking at either of them. In a hundred yards he came to a tobacconist's shop, and entered. Whilst he stood there fingering and pricing unsmokable cigars, rightly called 'weeds' by the Wrethedale youth who bought them, he kept an eye upon the street; and when the old man and the handsome girl went by, he said to the shopman :—

'That's an old fellow, now!'

'Yes, sir,' said the shopman.

'Your oldest inhabitant, I should say?' continued Joe, fishing with simple cunning.

'No, sir,' returned the man. 'Not as there's many older folks in the town neither. But the old gentleman's a new resident here, sir.'

'Indeed!' said Joe; and not seeing his way to any further questioning, he bought half-a-dozen of the unsmokables, and went out with a polite 'Good-morning.'

Youth and age were thirty or forty yards away when Joe, who had prolonged his business as much as possible, emerged from the tobacconist's shop. He followed slowly, lingering to stare in at shop windows where there was nothing in particular to attract his gaze, and pausing sometimes to look at the front of an old house covered with timber, and hanging somewhat over the street. By these devices he accommodated his pace to that of the pair in front, and every now and then he sent a glance in their direction. All these years had made such changes that he could not be quite certain, but he thought he recognised old Daniel. But who was the handsome girl, and what could have brought old Daniel into association with one who looked so far removed from him? Joe was almost sure

of Daniel, and the more he watched him, the more clearly he seemed to see the old gait and the old figure, altered as they were. The town High Street is not very long, and slowly as they went they soon came to the end of the shops, and reached a little range of semi-detached villas. At the gate of one of these paused the pair whose steps Joe was watching, and the girl gently helped the old fellow to mount to the gravelled pathway. Saunter as slowly as he could, they were only half-way up this pathway when Joe came level with them. The door of the house opened, and a voice spoke.

'Well, father, how do you feel after your walk?'

'I'm a bit fagged, Diner,' piped Daniel in his hoarse and shaky treble.

Joe looked and knew her, and sauntered by, with a head suddenly averted. There had been no need of the spoken name. There had been scarcely need for a sight of the face. The voice he remembered so well sounded unchanged in his ears. She looked her age—his passing glance, swiftly taken as it was, had told him that—and yet, how little altered by the years she seemed! As she had spoken to her father she had smiled, and Joe thought he might have seen the smile for the last time yesterday, it seemed so much the same.

As he walked away with his head a little drooping, all the past unrolled itself before him like a panorama. He had resigned himself years ago to believe that his father and mother were dead, and at rest from the trouble he had caused them, and he knew now, and had known always, that when their grey hairs reached the grave, he had hurried their going. He had never been hard-hearted, never the man to sin with impunity, and his folly and wickedness had been with him always, though never so heavily as now. There was no extenuation for himself in his own mind, no blame for anybody but Joe Bushell.

He knew nothing of the topography of the place, of course, but he struck into the fields on the right-hand side of the road, and making a long *détour* reached the far end of the town in a walk of three or four hours. It did not seem easy to pass the house again, and when he had reached the inn he was tied to his chamber until twilight fell. But then the longing of his heart drove him to the semi-detached villa, and he walked up and down in the dark before the gate, and heard a voice singing in the front room where a lamp was lighted. Where he stood he could hear the words quite clearly. 'Entreat me not to leave thee, nor to return from following after thee.' The musical setting was not such as would satisfy a student of the modern school, but it did the immortal words no wrong in the listener's ears, and the voice

that sang was sweet and true. A great artist might do the words more wrong than this simple liquid voice could do them. The voice was not that of Joe's wife, as he knew, but it came from the house she lived in, and it seemed to his heart to breathe her longing and faithfulness. He pushed open the gate, and, like Arden in Tennyson's story, he crept up the pathway and peeped through the window, at a little crevice of light between the casement and the blind. There he saw at the piano the girl who had given her arm to Daniel in the street that morning, and in a corner of the room Daniel himself looking frail, very old, and remarkably uninterested. Dinah sat behind the lamp, and the watcher could make out nothing of her until she arose and moved to the piano, where she laid a hand upon the musician's shoulder and spoke to her. Then Joe had a complete view of her face and looked his fill at it, till a step in the roadway startled him and he crouched lower, trusting to be unseen. As it happened, however, the owner of the footstep paused before the low wall, vaulted it noiselessly, dropping on the grass, and, advancing swiftly on tiptoe, touched Joe on the shoulder as he rose to meet the new-comer.

'I guessed it might be you,' said John Keen in a whisper, 'but I was not sure, and I was bound to see.'

Joe nodded and went on tiptoe down the gravelled pathway. John followed, and when they reached the road the younger man took the other's arm; they walked together for some distance without speaking, with their backs turned to the town.

'How did you find out the house?' John asked in a low tone. Something which he was not careful to analyse made him speak softly, as one does by instinct in a church.

'I saw old Daniel go in this morning,' answered Joe, and again they walked in silence for a time. 'Mr. Keen,' said Joe after that pause, 'I shall go back in the morning, and see Cheston. Advise me in the mean time. Can we do anything?'

'I have been thinking,' John returned. 'There is a friend of mine in Melbourne who was at school with me and with your son. He knows nothing of what has happened, and I might wire to him to see if he could tell us anything of George.'

'Do anything that suggests itself,' said Joe hopelessly. 'There need be no care about money in the matter. By the way'—he felt it absurd to affect to speak in that casual fashion, and yet he could not help it—'are they well-to-do?' giving his head a backward nod.

'Your wife and her father?' John asked him.

'Yes.'

'Daniel Banks is almost wealthy.'

'I was thinking,' Joe explained, 'that she might find money useful, if we could have found a way to give it her.'

'She does not want for money,' answered John, speaking brusquely.

'Well,' Joe resumed, 'I shall go back to-morrow. If there is anything to say, write to Cheston. He will let me know. There's nothing uncommon in my name, but if anybody heard it and associated it with me down there, it would be troublesome.'

'Mr. Bushell,' said John, stopping short in the dark road, and speaking like one who chooses his words carefully: 'I have no right to interfere in your affairs. When I first heard of your marriage and your disappearance, I thought ill of you, but since I met you I have changed my opinion—partly. I say again, I have no right to interfere in your affairs: and still I do so. You can stop me by a word.' He paused, but Joe said nothing. 'I have persuaded myself that your chief anxiety now is to do everything that can be done to rectify the wrongs you once did unthinkingly, or carelessly, and in the folly of youth.'

'Not unthinkingly, nor carelessly,' said Joe to himself, though not a word escaped his lips; 'but with my eyes open, and knowing that I was a villain all along.'

'If I am right in thinking as I do,' said John, after waiting vainly for an answer, 'I have one question to put to you.' He paused again.

'Go on.'

'If it could be shown to you that in the circumstances of the case it is your clear duty to acknowledge yourself to your wife, and to associate yourself with her in the endeavour to recover your own, would you do it?'

'I have only one duty left,' said Joe.

'And that is ——?'

'To do the best thing for her happiness. Understand me. To go back to her would be a pain and a humiliation. But I am not afraid of the pain and humiliation. I am afraid of adding to the unhappiness she has already suffered. I have been dead in her fancy for many years past, and whatever grief I cost her is done with long ago. If she finds that after all I have been alive, and have still kept away——why should I revive a trouble which has been dead this twenty years?'

'I have known your wife,' said John, 'ever since I was a little fellow eight or nine years old, when George and I first went to school together. I know how blameless and gentle a life she has lived, and I know partly how unhappy she has been. And if I am

not a greater ass than ever lived before, she is as truly attached to you still as she was when you went away.'

'To my memory. Not to me,' Joe answered with a heaving breast. 'I was two-and-twenty then; I am over eight-and-forty now. I'm not the man she loved. I'm not the man she knew.'

'Mr. Bushell,' said the young lawyer, clearing his voice of a slight huskiness before he spoke, 'if I had not been forced (against my will) to believe you after all a man with a good heart, a man who desires to make reparation for a wrong of such old standing, I would as soon bite my tongue off as speak one word to bring you two together. I don't remember my mother, sir, and I never had a sister of my own, and your wife, in a way, took the place they might have filled in my fancy when I was a lad, and there are not many people in the world whose welfare is so dear to me. I believe you are an honest fellow, sir, in spite of what happened so many years since, and if you can find it in your heart to be good to her in the future, and to spend your life, as you ought to spend it, in consoling her for all that she has undergone and suffered, I know you ought to do it. I am a young man, Mr. Bushell, and under other circumstances I hope I should speak with less confidence and more reserve. Perhaps it might seem to fit my age and yours better if I held my tongue altogether, but I am fond of your wife, sir, and I respect her as highly as anybody in the world, and that is all the excuse I have to offer.'

'You need offer no excuse,' Joe replied huskily. 'You have not said a word that I can find fault with. You have spoken as a man ought to speak.'

'I have some knowledge,' John resumed, with a new hesitation in his tone at first, 'of the young lady to whom your wife first gave her confidence. I know enough of her to be sure that if the secret of your presence in this country were entrusted to her it would be kept sacredly and as a trust of honour. With that knowledge in her power, she could be relied upon—I am sure of it—to approach your wife and ascertain her feeling, and I could rely upon her to conduct the matter with so much tact that no suspicion would be excited.'

John's admiration of Ethel and his belief in her had no bounds which it is worth while here to attempt to discover, but the returned exile could hardly be expected to share his faith in her. He said nothing, but even through the darkness John felt his distrust and hurried on.

'You will not forget your own contention, Mr. Bushell, that for many years your wife has had good reason to believe you dead. It will not be easy except on direct evidence to persuade her that

you are still alive. It cannot be easy for her to suspect the truth if the talk concerning you is led by a woman she loves, and is led naturally and without haste.'

'Give me time to think,' said Joe.

'I will ask you one more question, Mr. Bushell,' John continued. 'Are you convinced in your own mind that if your presence would be hailed by her, as I believe it would be, as a help and a solace, you could surrender yourself to be a help and solace to her? If you are uncertain of yourself in that respect, I will not press you by another word.'

'Mr. Keen,' Joe answered with a broken voice, 'if I could undo the wrong I did, I would lay down my life, though that is saying little. If I could lighten the burthen she has to bear by but ever so little, I would make any sacrifice that might be offered me. I don't speak unthinkingly or melodramatically in saying so, I mean it from my soul. But I will lay no new burthen on her. How could I, after all that she has suffered?'

'If she were glad to take you back again?' John pressed him still; 'if you knew that it would lighten the weight she has to bear to have you back? It is no light thing in itself to sink to an unloved and lonely age. Even if George were found and provided for and sent away, do you think she would be happy, and in no need of comfort? Is she in no need of comfort now?'

'What comfort is it in my power to bring her? A runaway nearly six-and-twenty years back, never since heard of! No, no, no. You tempt me to act on my own selfish longings, not to heal her wounds, poor thing.'

His voice was but half audible, and regrets and longings, and new-born hopes that hardly dared to hope, and fears that slew them as they lifted their weak heads, made a strange tumult in his heart.

There was no make-believe in the husky voice. True men are quick to read such things, and John knew the sincerity of every word the other spoke. There was little passion in the phrases used, but the man was true, and meant it all, and more. And this conviction could only spur the younger. It is something to an ingenuous youngster, whom the world has not yet chilled, to think that he can bring two sore hearts to peace and healing.

'Will you let me try to help you, Mr. Bushell?' he pleaded.

'Not in the way you propose,' said Joe, lifting his head in the darkness. 'There is too much danger to her peace in it.'

'In any other way?' John pressed him.

'In any way that helps her,' Joe responded, 'but in no way that endangers her peace of mind. I trust you, Mr. Keen. I am

compelled to trust you, but I could do it willingly without that. I have confidence in you.'

' You shall not find it misplaced,' said John.

' I am sure of it,' replied Joe. ' In the mean time, I dare stay here no longer. Wire to Melbourne and let me know the result of your inquiries. Place at the cable office at this end whatever sum may be needed for a full reply. I will go back with you now and lay money in your hands for that purpose. Wherever it is necessary to spend money in this inquiry, spend it without fear. For my own part, I can do nothing better than to go back and watch for my uncle George's recovery.'

The lawyer saw that it was useless just then to press him further. Joe laid plenteous funds at his disposal, and next day he disappeared from Wrethedale as he had arrived—a figure for a minute's gossip, but beyond that unnoticed and unknown.

CHAPTER XXVII.

So Dinah's longing heart went on unsatisfied in the old way, and was fed by little food of earthly hope or comfort. She had never resigned herself to forget Joe, but he was dead or beyond all earthly chance of meeting any more, and there were no new sorrows possible on that count. So far Joe was right. Had her son been what he should have been, Dinah, in spite of the great trouble of her youth, would have been a fairly happy woman. The deepest wounds heal at last, if they do not kill before the healing process can begin.

Now, I am not the first historian by many who has found himself involved in chronological difficulties, and like others I can only rely upon my reader's patience and discernment. When I had had young George eight or nine weeks in England, and had at last left him face to face with Ethel, I was compelled to go back to the hour of his arrival to show what his father had been doing in the mean time.

The two, meeting in this way, stood rooted each before the other. A cur, so caught, would have had the manliness to put his tail between his legs and run, but the tramp was incapable of even so much resolution as would command a flight. In the girl's mind, fear, and amazement, and hate, and wrath, and pity made a jumble of all thought, and left her also helpless. She had of course believed him still under lock and key, but, though she could scarce believe their evidence, her eyes told her he was here.

And being here, what could have brought him but one thing?—and that one thing, the desire to make an appeal to Dinah. Perhaps he had made an escape from prison. That indeed seemed the only solution of the mystery of his presence there, and, if it were so, he was proscribed and hunted.

As was natural, the noble nature recovered from the shock of this encounter whilst the abject one was yet stunned.

'How do you come here?' she asked; 'have you escaped?'

His knees shook, and he stared at her, until he hung his head before her glance and began to weep again.

'Have you escaped?' she repeated breathlessly.

'No,' the wretched creature answered. 'I was released. But I can get nothing to do, and I am starving.'

She sent her hand hastily to the pocket of her dress and found her purse there. Glancing into it, she saw two or three pieces of gold and a little heap of silver. His face seemed to have a dreadful fascination for her and to draw her towards him. She advanced little by little with the purse in her outstretched hand.

'Here,' she said, and dropping it into the hand he held out to receive it she recoiled, looking at him still with her hazel eyes widened to a glance of horror.

'I don't deserve it,' the tramp moaned and snuffed unman-like through his tears. 'I don't deserve it.'

'Why are you here?' she asked. The sight of him was a terror and a horror to her, but what could she do? 'You shall not show yourself to Dinah whilst you look like that. You would kill her!'

This hit him like a blow, and stopped his tears for a second or two. He stole a glance at her and dropped his eyes shiftily.

'Is *she* here?' he found courage to ask.

'Go,' she answered him, 'and write to me at the post-office, so that I can get the letter in the morning. Tell me where you are that I can send an answer. But don't stay in the town.'

'What is the name of the town?' he made shift to ask.

She told him, and repeated her bidding.

'Go. Buy some clothes, and write to me to-night.'

With that she turned from him and fairly ran down-hill towards the town; but nearing the houses, she dropped her veil and composed her gait. When she reached her own room she locked herself in and struggled in silence through an attack of hysteria, and then descended, pale, and with a glittering light in her eyes.

'Why, our Ethel,' cried her mother, 'what's happened to you? You look as if you'd seen a ghost,'

Ethel tried to laugh at this, with such ill success that, in spite of resolution, hysteria began again.

'What's happened to you?' the mother cried anew, when after a minute or so Ethel had recovered herself.

Ethel's conscience would not tolerate a lie, but she could not tell the whole truth.

'I was frightened,' she said, 'and I ran.'

'You frightened?' cried her mother. The good woman had never heard of such a thing before, for Ethel was not of the female tribe who squeal at spiders and experience in the presence of a mouse such terrors as might once have seized the people of Herculanum. 'What frightened you?'

'I met a tramp,' said Ethel faintly.

'Why, was he rude to you?' cried the old woman.

'No,' answered Ethel, unable to tell all. 'It was a lonely place, and he begged—that was all.'

'You mustn't take them ramblin' walks abroad, my love,' said her mother solicitously. 'It ain't fit for maids to go about alone. You should ha' somebody with you.'

All the evening long she harped upon the theme, and would scarce release Ethel from the house in the morning until she received assurance that nothing more was meant than a walk along the High Street.

The girl approached the post-office with some inward reluctance. It would not be nice for anybody to think that she received letters there without her mother's knowledge—even that the postmaster should think it, was anything but pleasant to her. And there by ill-fortune was young lawyer Keen talking with the official when Ethel entered. It was more and more awkward to ask for the letter in his presence, but, giving him a cold little bow, she passed to the counter.

'Have you a letter for me, addressed here?'

'Yes, Miss.'

The postmaster produced it. John saw that it was addressed in a male handwriting, and thought no more about it for the time. Ethel with another cold little bow responded to his renewed salute, and went home with her letter. When she came to read it she discovered that the writer had wept all over it, and it was so splashed and blotched as to be decipherable only after difficulty. In some matters, heart is taste. The hapless young man began this letter—'My lost love, lost for ever!—with a note of admiration scored in after the final letter, as if he had been writing for the printers. A shiver of disgust ran through the girl's frame as she read this exordium. The writer went on to say (as in the

letter addressed to John Keen) that he offered no excuses, feeling conscious that he had none to offer—adding, that he knew he was unworthy of her—at which the reader crawled afresh—but that his sins had entailed a terrible punishment. He threw in one or two phrases of Scripture—‘I have sinned before Heaven and against thee,’ and ‘My punishment is greater than I can bear,’—and he wound up by saying that he had re-attired himself, was staying at Borton at the sign of the Hare and Hounds in Wedge Street, and remained for ever her miserable and unworthy George. Then came a postscript, in which he stated that he had expended almost all the money she had so generously given him, and expressed in fitting terms that form of gratitude which has been defined as a sense of favours to come.

As for love's idol, that was long since broken, and the worshipper was still sorely wounded by the shards. But in women's hearts sometimes, in spite of any and all wrong-doing on the part of the idol's original, there lingers a tenderness for what he was or seemed to be in the days when the poor image was first modelled, and gilded with the gold of the devotee's own nature. And in spite of Ethel's hatred and contempt, there had lingered until now a certain starved and hungry sentiment (which would have been faith if it could) in favour of a lost George whom she had known to be manly and honest, and indeed filled with all noble qualities, only a little while ago. But whatever tendrils of the heart sought to reach and touch the past, the brutal egotism and vile unconscious insolence of this epistle blighted them for ever.

She folded up the sheet of blotted and tear-soiled paper, put it in its envelope, walked into the garden, passed through the wicket gate into Dinah's small territory, and so into the house. She had not slept all night, but her eyes shone with an unusual brilliance and her cheeks were flushed with clear colour. Dinah, who was in the back kitchen superintending her little west-country maid, kissed Ethel in a preoccupied way, and noticed nothing unusual in her aspect for a minute. But by-and-by, attracted by her silence, she turned, and saw at a glance that the girl's whole nature was in some way strongly stirred.

‘Come into the sittin'-room, my dear,’ she said gently, and moved away, Ethel following.

Daniel sat in the front kitchen with his feet on the steel fender, and patted the girl's hand in answer to the passing kiss she gave him. The kiss was warmer and tenderer than usual, for they were all knit together by the same sorrow, she thought.

‘Dinah,’ said Ethel, ‘I have brought you news which you will be relieved to hear.’ Dinah began to tremble, and the girl

put her arms about her. ‘They are not going to keep your son in prison all the time they said.’

Dinah stood free of her embraces, looking at her.

‘If it would be any comfort to you, you can see him.’

‘Where?’ said Dinah, ‘where? When are they going to let him free again?’

‘Can you bear to be told, dear?’ asked Ethel. ‘They have let him out already.’

Dinah clasped her hands and slipped into a seat, though, but for Ethel’s arms guiding her, she would have fallen to the floor. She arose with shaking knees and trembling hands.

‘Where is he? Let me go to him. Let me see him. Where is he?’

‘You can see him to-day, dear, if you will. He is at Borton, at the Hare and Hounds in Wedge Street.’

‘Ethel, my dear,’ said Dinah, ‘I must go and see him. He is my child, for all he’s been so wicked. I must go and see him.’

‘Yes, darling, yes,’ Ethel answered. ‘You must go. You will go to-day?’

‘Yes, yes, yes,’ declared Dinah, with trembling eagerness. She seemed to think that some apology was due to Ethel, for she clung to her and repeated that he was her child—he was her child, after all. And, to tell the truth, the poor thing’s soul was rent between her horror of her child and the blind yet holy instinct of motherhood which drew her to him in spite of his wickedness. She shared to the full all Ethel’s loathing of his crimes—they had steeled even her heart against him for an hour—but she remembered all her own maternal pangs and fears, and his father’s far-off kisses and embraces; sacred—sacred enough to sanctify even him. And so the mother’s instinct drew her to his side, willing to share his shame and bear his burthen.

She was so agitated—as was natural—that she was compelled to leave to Ethel all arrangements for the journey, which, though brief enough, could scarcely be performed impromptu. There was money to be got for the prodigal, and this was only to be obtained from Daniel, whose natural tight-fistedness increased with age. Ethel explained that Dinah was going to Borton, and wanted money.

‘Her’s allays a-gooin’ to Borton,’ moaned Daniel, ‘an’ her’s allays a-wantin’ money.’

But he surrendered his keys to Ethel after his customary grumble, and sent her upstairs for his cash-box, having first removed with infinite fumbling the particular key which opened it.

'That'll be enough for her,' said Daniel, producing a half-sovereign.

'Not at all,' said Ethel disdainfully. Patience with small vices was not her pet virtue.

'What's her want it for?' piped Daniel in obstinate remonstrance. 'I baint a-goooin' to ha' my money throwed about wasteful. No, no.'

'Mr. Banks,' said Ethel decisively, 'you ought to be ashamed of yourself. Dinah never asks you for a penny unless she really wants it.'

'Well, what's her want, an' what's her want it for? he asked.

'She wants five pounds,' said Ethel.

'Eh?' cried the old fellow in dismay. 'Five pound? Her'd like me to die i' the workus, I believe!'

'Never mind, Mr. Banks,' said Ethel; 'I can borrow the money from my mother, I dare say.'

'Rubbidge!' said Daniel. 'My gell's beholden to nobody.'

And with long-drawn reluctance he produced a five-pound note, and having smoothed it with affectionate fingers, and rustled it near his ear with finger and thumb, and held it half-a-dozen times against the light to admire the water-mark, he surrendered it. There was nobody in the world but Ethel who would have succeeded on such terms with him, but he was in some dread of her as being 'a cut over' his own kind of folks, and he was more obedient to her than to anybody else. He was growing downwards fast into that second childhood which is robbed of all the graces of the first, and owns nothing endearing but its helplessness, and the memory of what its manhood was, perhaps.

Then there was the time-table to be consulted, and, since Dinah was going, Daniel's dinner must be arranged for next door. These and other little duties of a like sort Ethel took upon herself, and although there is nothing *per se* heroic in getting a five-pound note out of the fingers of a miserly old man, or in making arrangements for the old man's dinner, there have been achievements chronicled in very glowing language which have deserved less praise than these simple doings merited under the circumstances. For the girl's heart was burning all the time, and every wound her base lover had given her was throbbing with new agony. She gave no sign, and that is woman's heroism.

When Dinah reached the market town she found Wedge Street opening off the market-place, which was alive with stalls and rustic dealers—a street very broad at its upper end and very narrow at its lower, where it closed in with the Hare and Hounds, which seemed to have been drawn up across it to block the thoroughfare. As

fate willed it, she had no need to make inquiries after her son, for just as she crossed the threshold he appeared in the passage, and they saw each other.

'Come with me,' she said tremblingly. 'We can't talk here.'

They walked up the street and along one side of the market square, into the town High Street, and on for half a mile until there were fields on either side, and there was no one near. Then they turned into a narrow little lane, and there the mother threw her arms about the criminal's neck and lifted up her voice and wept. I will not say that the tears that filled his eyes were altogether base and unworthy at that moment. Some touch of ruth was on him after all, and he felt ashamed of himself. As Dinah hugged him close to her breast and clung to him, the old barriers which had so long held back the words gave way.

'My child, my George, my son—my own child!'

The wretched George, standing there like a lay figure to be hugged, and not having in him, as yet, the immeasurable insolence to pretend any love to Dinah in return, was smitten by these words as by a hammer. And, of course, the one interpretation he put on them was that Dinah's mind had somehow become unsettled, and that she was not answerable for what she was saying. That one idea which had been in her mind from the hour when first she had heard of her boy's arrest was uppermost now.

'You were wicked, George,' she sobbed as she kissed him, and he braced himself to receive her reproaches with propriety, 'but it was all my wicked fault as you was tempted. If I'd ha' been brave an' good, an' let you had your rights, you'd ha' been a good lad, I know you would—I know you would, my dear.'

It was evident to George's mind that Dinah was very mad indeed. Her words meant nothing to him.

'And, oh!' cried Dinah in an agony of tears and caresses, 'I never told you as I *was* your mother, and of course you never growed up to love me like a child would ha' done.'

Really it was getting time for sanity to interfere. The shock of these extraordinary notions had for the moment driven George's humilities out of him. He struggled from her embraces, though she clung to him hard, and standing at arm's length he spoke :

'Dinah, what are you talking about? Are you mad?'

'No, darlin', no,' she answered. 'Oh George, forgive me. I've been a wicked woman.'

In the pain of her self-accusation, she threw herself upon her knees before him, and in that attitude she told her story. It sounded incredible at first, and he held for a minute or two his first opinion—that Dinah had gone mad. But as she went on

with the tale, and came to her interview with old George, and his refusal to believe her, and as the listener's mind grasped the fact that if the tale were true his mother owned a full half of George Bushell's fortune, such a light poured over everything old George had said and done and seemed, that doubt was impossible. Under that sudden beam of light, old George's one intelligible motive stood revealed, and a truth which needed no bolstering was corroborated a half-minute later by the few and hurried words in which the agonised mother told of the theft of the certificate. The whole tale was told so swiftly, and was so broken by the narrator's sobs, and so tangled by the listener's sideway guesses here and there, that half the details miscarried on their way to his intelligence; but the main truth of it stood like a pyramid, dominant and unshakable. He saw it, and his head whirled, and he gasped at it. The felon of little more than half a year ago, the penniless and starving tramp of yesterday, was the rightful heir to a quarter of a million of money! He had known—everybody had known—how much old Joe Bushell had been worth when he died. Dinah knelt at his feet, clinging to his knees and pleading with him, and he never heard her.

'Say you forgive me, dear; say you forgive me! Oh, I have been a wicked, wicked woman; but only say you forgive me, darlin'! Say you forgive me!'

He did not answer by a word. A quarter of a million of money, and he the rightful heir to it! That amazing vision shut everything else from sight. The pleading mother struggled from her knees and clasped him once more to her bosom.

'Say you forgive me, darlin'! Say you forgive me!'

'Yes, yes,' he answered, with his old fretful impatience. The news had shaken him into himself again. He began to see that, in place of being a sinner, he had all this time been sinned against most deeply. Swindled! Juggled into penitence and tears by the man who strove to rob him of so vast a sum! His wrath rose above even his amazement.

'I can't expect you to love me all at once,' his mother pleaded. 'I can't expect it, when I've been so wicked; but you will love me a bit, my darlin', won't you, when you've had time? Won't you? Won't you?'

'Yes, yes,' he said again impatiently, scarcely knowing what he answered to.

'You shall have your rights, George,' said unhappy Dinah, fawning on him heart-brokenly. She had no blame for him that he did not answer her caresses and her words of endearment. It was her fault that he had been robbed—not of a fortune merely,

but of a mother. How could she hope that he would love her all at once? 'I've got my lines now, darlin',' she wept to him. 'I've brought 'em with me to show you, so as you shouldn't misbelieve me.' She drew the paper from her bosom, and he looked at it mechanically at first, but then with understanding.

Every pulse in his body, and every current of his little soul, turned one way, and for once in his life he threw off every tatter of pretence and humbug, and spoke the truth as he saw it.

'My God, Dinah!' he cried aloud, 'you HAVE been a fool, to be sure!'

(*To be continued.*)

Mr. Cimabue Brown on the Defensive.

Or, yes ; I have the courage of my opinions, and I am not ashamed to come forward and defend them under my own name. Don't for a moment suppose that I am the least little bit afraid of Mr. Du Maurier. It is quite true that he has cut me up most unmercifully in 'Punch,' that he has desecrated the sanctity of private life by representing my drawing-room in public caricatures, and that he has held up the dress and personal attractions of Mrs. Cimabue Brown herself to general ridicule in his amusing sketches. But I am not at all angry with him : I really feel, on the contrary, quite grateful for his attentions. Not that I am anxious for notoriety, nobody less so ; and I confess I did feel a little awkward just at first when everybody used to say to me every Wednesday regularly, 'Well, Cimabue, my boy, I see Du Maurier has another slash at you this morning ;' but now I have quite lived down all those little personal weaknesses. I have not achieved greatness, it has been thrust upon me ; but I accept it quietly, with that dignified reserve which becomes a man of culture.

The fact is, you know—and I wonder people haven't seen it long ago—Mr. Du Maurier isn't really making fun of me at all : he is helping me in a roundabout way to spread my theories. Why does he love so much to represent my Japanese fans, my Oriental blue, my pomegranate dado ? Do you suppose for a moment it is because he is genuinely anxious to laugh at such things ? Not a bit of it. He sympathises secretly with all my tastes, he is just as fond of good furniture and pretty things as I am, and he makes caricatures of me and my belongings because these are the subjects which he loves best to draw—and very natural of him, too. If it was his *métier* to exhibit interiors at the Academy, he would paint my little breakfast-room alcove, with Mrs. Cimabue Brown as a Florentine lady of the fifteenth century : as it's his *métier* to make us all laugh in 'Punch' instead, he draws the self-same alcove, with Mrs. Cimabue Brown in her natural character—that's all. It isn't ill-natured satire, and I don't object to it. It serves to interest thousands of people, who would never otherwise have heard of the *Æsthetic Revolution* of the Nineteenth Century, in all my aims and projects. His pictures are propædeutic, as Prigsby says : Prigsby, you know, is the celebrated Oxford *aesthetic* don who collects hawthorn-pattern porcelain, and supplies us all with good Greek words, which are

warranted to be the purest Attic. If Mr. Du Maurier dared, he would laugh with us; but as he doesn't dare, he laughs against us: and it comes to very much the same thing in the long run.

I say thus much by way of preface, because I know you will be astonished to find me describing myself by my true name. You will say, 'Why does he call himself Cimabue Brown? If he wants to defend the *aesthetics*, why doesn't he take some other name, instead of avowing himself by one which has been made ridiculous to all of us in the pages of our great national censor, *Mr. Punch*?' Why, my dear sir (or madam), don't you know that caricature is in its very nature exaggeration, and that neither I nor any other 'aesthete' am one-twentieth part as ridiculous as Mr. Du Maurier makes us out to be? Do you really suppose that any one of us talks the marvellous jargon that Mr. Gilbert puts into our mouths in 'Patience'; or that we really dress our wives in such ridiculous costumes, or worship lilies, or dedicate our days to the study of the intense? All that is just the playful nonsense of our satirists, who are as a rule our intimate friends, and to a great extent our imitators too. Therefore, in spite of all the fun which has been poked at me in '*Punch*' and elsewhere, I prefer to come forward under my own Christian and surname, and to brave the ridicule which will be sure to greet me when I attempt to make myself known *in propriâ personâ*.

I venture to say that I am a typical and representative 'aesthete.' I was aesthetic from the very beginning. I invested in drawings by Mr. Rossetti when Mr. Rossetti's name was only known to a small clique of esoteric admirers. I bought Mr. Morris's earliest wall-papers; I led the way in introducing high dados; I collected old Japanese while all the rest of the world was still bowing down in awful idolatry to the hideous deities of Sèvres and Dresden. At last, people generally began to be more or less of my way of thinking. Society slowly came round, to start with; then the middle classes attempted feebly to aestheticise their Philistia; and now even seaside lodgings are trying to put on some faint semblance of decent decoration. Our principles triumphed; but with the triumph there came, of course, a little friendly chaff as well. It all means no more than that. The fun in '*Punch*' and at the theatres is really an indirect tribute to our victory. Nobody publishes caricatures of the highly respectable member for East Loamshire, or of the amiably somnolent representative of King's Peddington: those obscure and well-meaning gentlemen may slumber in peace upon the back benches of the Opposition without fearing the potent pencil of Mr. Tenniel. But when a man rises to be a Prime Minister or a Chancellor of the Ex-

chequer he may be sure that no cartoon will spare the peculiarities of his personal appearance, and that Mr. Pellegrini will duly immortalise the cut of his waistcoat and the special twist of his left whisker in a delightful sketch for 'Vanity Fair.' It is just the same with ourselves. I take Mr. Du Maurier's friendly sallies much as Mr. Gladstone doubtless takes his counterfeit presentment in the hands of the weekly caricaturists. When the first mention of my name appeared in 'Punch,' I blushed a little, it is true; but I said to my wife at once, 'Linda, my dear, the Revolution is accomplished, and the era of culture has at last set in.'

However, I fancy I hear you saying, 'This is not the real Cimabue Brown at all, but only an audacious and transparent pretender. He hasn't got the style of the original in any way. He says nothing about the Utter, or the Intense, or the Ineffable; he doesn't even allude to the Renaissance; but he talks plain, straightforward English, just like you and me.' My dear sir (or madam, once more), what else would you expect? Don't you see that you are taking your idea of me from the caricature, and then blaming the original because you don't find it so ridiculous as the acknowledged exaggeration? It is as though you expected to see Socrates in real life actually engaged in shoeing fleas, because Aristophanes chaffed him about that impossible occupation; or as though you declined to admit the identity of a peer because he wasn't wearing his coronet round his chimney-pot hat, as he always does in Mr. Tenniel's cartoons. Believe me, you will no more find me in my own home practising all the absurdities which my genial critic pretends to observe in my conduct, than you will find Connemara wholly peopled with heavy-jawed comic Irishmen, or Paris entirely overrun with shoulder-shrugging Mossoos of the conventional English stage pattern.

Having thus, I hope, got rid of my supposed characteristics, and put myself forward in my own genuine personality, let me endeavour a little more fully to explain the real good which I hope and trust I am doing in the world. I believe I really represent the *Æsthetic* Revolution; and I hold that, in spite of 'Patience' and 'Punch,' and all the rest of it, the *Æsthetic* Revolution is an accomplished fact. It is here, there, and everywhere *en évidence* before our eyes. I can't walk from my club up St. James's Street without seeing it staring at me from every shop window in London. I can't go into a friend's house without observing it in every room, from the entrance hall to the attics. I can't travel about the country without noticing how it pervades every village in England. I can't go to the theatre without finding it put bodily upon the stage. I can't buy a comic paper without running up against it in non-

sensical misrepresentation. Say what you like of it, there it is, an unmistakable fact, growing like Jonah's gourd before our very eyes, and spreading so wide that it overshadows all the land with its sunflowers and its pomegranate blossoms. And I say to myself all the time, with some complacency I acknowledge, 'All this is the work of our set.'

Fifty years ago, art in England was practically all but unknown. People generally understood that it had something to do with the National Gallery and the Royal Academy ; and that it was very expensive ; and that in order to know anything about it, you must be born to the inheritance of an ancestral picture-gallery, and must travel abroad to Rome and Florence. As to the possibility of its having any connection, then or ever, with their own every-day lives, they would as soon have speculated on the possibility of every English child talking classical Latin, and every agricultural labourer spending his spare cash on the purchase of Elzevirs or Bodonis. Art meant pictures and statues ; and pictures and statues were *spécialités* for the same class which could afford to keep French cooks, and thorough-bred racehorses, and domestic chaplains, and a score of gamekeepers. For themselves, they were perfectly content to live in ugly houses, with ugly carpets, ugly wall-papers, and ugly furniture ; while the interests of literature, science, and art were sufficiently considered in three mouldy-looking illustrated books on the drawing-room table, a few coarse lithographs hung upon the wall, and a squeaky piano in the corner, with an arsenic-green satin lining behind the cheap veneered fretwork which overhung the keyboard cover.

It was in those hopeless and hideous days that I and my fellow workers grew up. As young men we began to feel that this was not all quite right. We were not born to the inheritance of picture-galleries, nor were we dukes or Manchester manufacturers, that we should buy old masters, and give commissions to sculptors for preserving our own amiable features in marble busts. Most of us were decidedly far from rich ; we belonged to the professional middle classes, almost without exception. I myself, as you doubtless know, began life as a Government clerk, on a salary of 120*l.* a year. Prigsby was a fellow of St. Catherine's College, Oxford ; Macmurdo, the author of those charming essays on the Early Flemish Painters, was art critic for the 'Hebdomadal Investigator ;' Partington, who took at last to designing furniture, was a student at the Academy ; and my dear friend Mawkins was, and is, a solicitor in Chancery Lane. We couldn't indulge in collecting pictures ; we couldn't even in those days (when we were yet young and struggling) go to Rome or Florence ; but we had an idea that

something might be done to make English home life a little more beautiful, a little more cultivated, and a little more refined than it used to be. We didn't see why the dukes and the country gentlemen should claim to have a monopoly of taste and culture. We determined to set to work ourselves, and to make our own homes at least as pretty and as refined as we could. Some people say we were selfish in our aims, mere cultivated voluptuaries who elevated our own personal pleasures into our one standard of action. That, I think, is a mistake. To be sure, we began our reforms at home; but then, we began them at home in the hope that our example might induce the rest of the world to follow us. We were silent preachers for years, and at last our unspoken sermons began to produce their effect upon other people.

At last the Revolution came, and we felt that we had borne our part in it. I don't want you to misunderstand me: I don't for a moment suppose we did it all single-handed. Ever since the first great Exhibition—the Hyde Park Crystal Palace, I mean—we have watched a gradual struggling of the public mind upward towards some faint conception of terrestrial beauty. At first it struggled very blindly, and went worshipping all kinds of odd knobby 'Gothic' chairs, and absurd Indian or quasi-mediæval monstrosities. Still, it was beginning to shake itself awake, in a queer, sleepy, half-unconscious fashion. But plenty of good people kept prodding it up on every side, and helped to rouse it from its lethargy of contented ugliness. The Prince himself (though he *was* a German) did something: the Schools of Art and all the South Kensington business did more. They were symptomatic of reviving life—they showed that people were getting dimly conscious of a screw loose somewhere. Then Mr. Ruskin, too, undoubtedly helped us on greatly. I don't agree by any means with all that Mr. Ruskin says—between you and me, I consider him just a trifle confused and flighty—but he did certainly set before people the supreme necessity of having decent jugs, and pots, and pans, and pipkins, and he spoke a good word in season for the Pre-Raffaelites, in the days when Pre-Raffaelitism was regarded as something half-way between Bedlam and heresy. Finally Mr. Morris came, and from the advent of Mr. Morris I date the Year One of the Revolution. Undeniably, he was the great prime agent in the movement. Mr. Ruskin had only preached, but our poet-artist practised. He didn't *talk* to people about good papers, and carpets, and chairs, and sofas: he *made* them for us. Hundreds of human beings who haven't a spark of the inventive faculty in their heads have taste enough to admire such things when they are put before them; and what Mr. Morris

designed or recommended, they could buy. That, I take it, was the main step in the great æsthetic reformation of modern England.

Still, we of the Hampstead clique did something. We stood to Mr. Morris in the same relation in which a wooden dummy wearing the celebrated sixteen-shilling trousers or the famous three-guinea suit of dittos stands to Messrs. Moses and Son or to Mr. Kino. We illustrated the new style. We displayed the æsthetic papers upon our walls ; we laid the æsthetic carpets upon our floors ; we stuck the Japanese fans and the Oriental blue over our mantelpieces. People came to see us, and said these things were very pretty ; they went away, and bought others like them. Above all, we bore the ridicule and the odium of setting a new fashion. Many of our friends laughed at us : some of them caricatured us : all of them misunderstood our motives. They said we wanted to gain notoriety, or that we were going mad, or that our only object was social advancement. But we didn't care for that : we decorated our houses with what we thought pretty things ; we dressed our wives and children in what we thought pretty colours ; and we felt sure that the world at large would come round at last to our views, as you now see it practically has.

Of course, after everybody has taken really to decorating their houses just as Macmurdo had been advising them to do for twenty years, and after everybody has taken to copying Mrs. Cimabue Brown's dresses, even so as to put plates of them in the 'Gazette des Dames,' there naturally arises an outcry that we, the leaders of the movement, are, after all, a very ridiculous and overwrought set of mere æsthetic prigs and posers. That is the necessary result of notoriety. Mawkins always meets this accusation in a sort of half-hearted, palliating fashion. He says that every great revolution is accompanied by some extravagances and excesses : that the Reformation had its Anabaptists and its Iconoclasts ; that the Puritan movement had its Fifth Monarchy men and its naked prophets. Whenever people feel and think a great deal about any given subject, there are sure to be some, he believes, whose zeal will outrun their discretion, and who will make a good cause look ridiculous by their extravagances. 'Don't consider the few *outré* enthusiasts,' he says, 'but consider the immense change for the better actually wrought in unpretending ways among ten thousand English households.' I for my part, however, don't care to be apologetic. I *won't* apologise, so don't expect it. I boldly deny the whole accusation. I say there are *no* such æsthetes as those angular-elbowed, green-complexioned, intense young ladies and gentlemen whom popular satire represents as typical of our set.

I defy you to point me out one single specimen in real life. I, Cimabue Brown, am probably at this moment the best ridiculed and most laughed-at man in all England; and yet I am not ashamed of myself. I ask you to look at us as we really are, not as you see us caricatured in Mr. Du Maurier's clever sketches or Mr. Gilbert's comic operas. Come to one of my wife's Wednesday evening At Homes, and you will see, I can promise you, all the most æsthetic people in London assembled together. I acknowledge that you will find a sunflower decoration in the hall; and very pretty it is too, for my friend Partington took as much pains with that dado as he ever took with anything he has designed. I acknowledge also that you will find old china plates put up against the wall, and Venetian glass in the cabinet, and some good Persian tiles around the fireplace, and a pretty Indian rug on the floor. I allow that you will find the girls dressed for the most part in pleasant neutral tints, not in crude and staring reds, greens, and yellows; and that you will hear more conversation about Italian pictures and Mr. Lang's last Ballade than about the latest fluctuations of the Stock Exchange or about two private persons' irresponsible opinions on the hundred and twentieth clause of the Irish Land Bill. But if you see anybody posing in mediæval attitudes after Fra Angelico, or attempting to assume an expression of earnest ideality after Sandro Botticelli, or talking the burlesque jargon about subtle influences and utter intensity after Mr. Du Maurier, why, then I promise you to forfeit five hundred pounds down without a murmur for the benefit of the Royal Hospital for Incurable Idiots. And I will use my first nomination as a Benefactor to ensure that person's immediate admission within the walls of the institution.

If you turn from fancy to fact, the real thing that we have accomplished is this: we have obtained the general recognition of culture as a distinct aim in English life. Even those people who laugh at us most have really adopted our principles and imitated our practice. There is hardly a middle-class house in England where our wall-papers and our *cretonnes* have not penetrated. The mantelpieces which used once to be covered with blue and gold vases and ormolu clocks are now decorated with olive-green Vallauris pottery and quaintly pretty Satsuma teapots. The girls who used once to work Berlin-wool tapestry with square mosaic pictures of ladies and lapdogs and monstrous realistic roses, now work with crewels in really beautiful decorative patterns drawn to conventionalised designs. Our women universally dress in subdued and delicate colours; even our children play with toy books made lovely for them by Kate Greenaway and Walter

Crane. Some of the attempts that people make at the beautiful are still doubtless painful and ridiculous enough ; but, at any rate, they make the attempt, instead of remaining as of old in a blissful and contented state of utter Philistine ugliness. To know a little about art, about poetry, about the emotional side of life altogether, has become an object and a desire with thousands and thousands of people who never felt it so before. And that result has been brought about in large part, I confidently assert, by us, the despised and much-ridiculed ‘æsthetes.’ In the proud consciousness of having played my part in a great and beneficent revolution—a revolution which has made home life happier, brighter, purer, nobler, and in a word higher, for hundreds of thousands of Englishmen and Englishwomen—I can afford, I feel, to laugh lightly at the little passing jokes and not unkindly caricatures of my good friends at the theatres and in the comic papers. After all, as I said before, in making fun of me they are really playing my game, and helping indirectly to familiarise the world with those objects and methods which seem to me most beautiful and most desirable.

There are a few other more serious objections, however, sometimes urged against the great contemporary æsthetic movement typified by my unworthy personality, about which objections I should like to say a few words in passing, now that I have got you fairly buttonholed in a corner by yourself. The first of them—a very common one—is that we ‘æsthetes’ are sworn enemies to colour. There never was a greater mistake on this earth. We revel in colour ; we perfectly roll in it ; we live in the midst of green, and blue, and scarlet, and purple all our days. Nobody who has once seen the interior of a really good modern æsthetic house could ever afterwards seriously commit such a ridiculous blunder as to say that it was ‘dingy’ or ‘gloomy,’ or ‘faded-looking,’ as a thousand unthinking critics assert unhesitatingly every day. I think I can see the origin of this absurd misconception : it arises from looking at things piecemeal, instead of taking them in their harmonious final combination. Young ladies and gentlemen, walking down Oxford Street, glance into the windows of a famous red-brick shop near the lower end of Orchard Street, and see there some ebony cabinets, some Persian blue and white pottery, some delicate neutral tints of carpet, some yards of dark-green velvet with an inexpressibly faint undertone of peacock blue. They contrast these sober shades with the staring reds, and blues, and yellows in the carpets, wall-papers, satin-covered chairs, and other noisy upholsteries in various adjacent windows of the old-fashioned sort ; and they come to the conclusion that æsthetic

people hate colour. They forget that these things are but the ground tones of the whole finished picture, and that in a fully furnished æsthetic house they would find them so interspersed with pictures, pottery, flowers, decorations, and the dresses of women and children, that the entire effect would be one of peculiarly rich, deep, and harmonious colouring.

As a matter of fact, it is the Philistine house which eschews colour. There white—dead, cold, pale, cheerless white—forms the background and keynote of the total decorative effect. The ceiling is white all over. The wall-paper is white, with a few patches of regularly-disposed gold ornamentation in geometrical squares. The mantelpiece is of white marble. The carpet has a white ground sprinkled with red and blue roses. The cheap chromolithographs which do duty for fine art have broad white margins; and there is no deeper colouring to balance and neutralise this chilly general tone. The place of honour over the hearth is filled by a great gilt mirror, which reflects the white ceiling. The chairs and sofas are covered in pale blue satin. The vases are in whitish glass. The ornaments are Parian statuettes, alabaster boxes, and white spar knick-knacks. There is hardly a bit of colour in the whole room; and whatever there is consists of crude masses of unmitigated blue, red, and yellow, isolated in great harsh patches amid the prevailing sea of inhospitable white. The place seems contrived on purpose to repel one by its utter unhomeliness.

Now, just contrast such a room as this with my little drawing-room in the small house at Hampstead. Our ceiling is covered with a pretty continuous distempered design; our walls are broken into a high decorative dado of storks and water-plants beneath, and a small upper piecing above with geometrical interlacing patterns in a contrasting hue. Our floor is polished at the sides, and has two or three different rugs placed about between the chairs and tables. So every bit of the framework of the room is simply full of colour—subdued, pleasant, restful colour for the most part, I allow, with unobtrusive patterns which do not solicit or fatigue the eye, but still most unmistakable colour, as different as possible from the poverty-stricken white of utter Philistia. Then we have a few pictures hung upon the upper piecing; a few decorative plates fastened against the wall; a cabinet with Venetian glass and good old Chinese porcelain above the dark red mantelpiece; and a hearth set above with green and blue Persian tiles. We have chairs and sofas covered with pretty tapestry; we have a few crewel-work anti-macassars (which I myself detest, but endure for Mrs. Cimabue Brown's sake); we have flowers in abundance; and on reception nights we have the dresses and faces of women

enlivening the whole scene. If you were to drop in at one of our Wednesday evenings, I'm quite sure you would say you never saw so much colour crowded into a single room in all your life before. Only, the colour is not dispersed about indiscriminately in great solitary patches; it is harmonised and subdued and combined into a single decorative chromatic effect.

When I say I know you would think so, I am not speaking quite at random, but am generalising soberly from my past experience. A great many casual acquaintances of mine, who have never been to my house, but have met me at friends' dinners, or at our office (the Secretary of State for Scotland's), have said to me, 'Well, Mr. Brown, we're quite sure we shouldn't like your style of furnishing; we've heard it's so very severe and æsthetic.' But whenever I've asked them just to drop in and see it, they've almost invariably gone away, not only charmed, but with a fixed determination to furnish their own houses in the same fashion. I don't say they've all of them admired my Simone Memmi (a Saint Catherine with an expression of incomparable spirituality that very few except my intimate friends thoroughly appreciate); I won't even pretend that they always liked my Filippino Lippi, my four best teacups, or indeed several of my treasures in detail. Some of them have gone so far as to criticise severely Partington's door-panels in the breakfast-room, or to object to that exquisite peacock-feather border on the *portière* in my study. But every one of them without exception has praised heartily and sincerely the general effect. I don't expect people who can only see stiff wooden figures in a Giotto or coarse splashes of lampblack in a Dürer, to sympathise at once with my Memmi—that sort of thing only comes with study, and involves familiarity with the development of art—but I do expect them to like the look of my house as a whole, and I find I am almost invariably right in my expectation.

I'll give you just one instance. There's Theophilus Jenkins of our office—my colleague as head clerk in the other department—whom I have known ever since we got our appointments together twenty years ago, but whom I happened somehow never to have taken home to dinner, because he's a man of such very different tastes and habits from myself. Well, after 'Punch' began to make such fun of me, Jenkins, who's a conventional frock-coat-and-tall-hat sort of person, said to me one day, 'Brown, my dear fellow, there's an awful lot of talk about you and your notions in the papers. What's it all about, I wonder?' So I said to him, 'Well, Jenkins, if you'll come and dine with me on Saturday next, I dare say you'll be able to judge for yourself.' At first Jenkins didn't

quite like it ; said he was no critic, that he was sure my taste was quite above his head, and that he should offend me by his dulness and want of appreciation. However, I insisted upon his coming, and he came. As soon as he got inside my doors, he gazed about him just as if he was bewildered ; and then he began to say in a low voice, ‘ Oh, how beautiful ! how very beautiful ! how very, very beautiful ! ’ and so he went on, crescendo, as if he couldn’t recover himself, for five minutes. The fact was, he had never seen anything pretty in his life before, and it quite took away his breath at first. After he had cooled down a little, he asked leave to look at every separate object in detail, just as if the house had been a museum, and with most of them he was delighted. He didn’t care for the Memmi, of course—he said it looked too like an old sign-board ; and he didn’t care for the Oriental blue—he said it reminded him of a common ginger-jar ; nor did he care for the decorative storks, which he naively remarked were not exactly life-like in their attitudes. But as for the *tout ensemble*, he cordially praised it ; and when he was going away, he asked leave from my wife to bring Mrs. Theophilus Jenkins to see the whole thing at an early opportunity, that she might gather a few hints for her own drawing-room. Now, that, you know, from a typical Philistine, dwelling in the Gath and Askelon of Clapham, I call a very conclusive proof of genuine conversion.

There is a second objection, however, even more ridiculous than the first, which I often see urged by ill-informed writers in the daily papers. They complain that what they call æsthetic furniture is hard, uncomfortable, and knobby ; that you can’t sit on the chairs without twisting your back ; that you can’t lie on the sofas without dislocating your neck ; and that you can’t move across the room without imminent danger of upsetting an afternoon tea-table. They say all the furniture is designed to look artistic and graceful, but not to suit the comfort and convenience of the user. In short, they accuse us of sacrificing everything to external appearances.

How such an incomprehensibly topsy-turvy notion of our proceedings ever got about, I confess is to me as inscrutable as the ways of Providence generally are. I consider it simply and solely the exact reverse of the truth. It is in Philistia that the chairs are stiff and straight-backed, that the sofas are hard and uncongenial to the human vertebral column, that the open space in rooms is encumbered with little flimsy tables which topple over incontinently on the slightest provocation. Where these captious critics got their idea of æsthetic furniture I cannot imagine—certainly not from the little house at Hampstead ; for neither

Mrs. Cimabue Brown nor I would ever admit anything of the sort into the place. Our easy-chairs are all large, low, and well stuffed, with sloping backs exactly adapted to the natural poise of the human body; most of them are covered in pleasant neutral shades of dark velvet or tapestry, and exactly designed to meet the comfort of those who wish to read, to work, or to converse. They are placed at convenient angles as regards the light, both by day and night; they stand neither too near nor too far from the fire-place; and they are agreeably varied in size, shape, and position, to suit the varying requirements of mankind or womankind, of grown-up people or of children—for we always love to see our children in the same room with ourselves. Our occasional chairs are low, pleasantly shaped, and with curved backs to take the natural contour of the shoulders. Our sofas are the perfection of ease for lazy people who want to lounge—my wife declares, indeed, that they encourage lounging a great deal too much, and that she will condemn me to a Philistine arm-chair, specially purchased in Tottenham Court Road, if I persist in reading my ‘Bimonthly Review’ there after dinner. And, finally, our tables are all stoutly and firmly planted on good, solid wooden legs, so that it takes a real effort to make them topple over.

I am thus particular in describing the nature of my own furniture, because I have seen most personal and mistaken statements made about it in the public prints, where my name has actually been mentioned in full. I have seen it said that my chairs and sofas were insufferably stiff and uncomfortable, and that my guests had often to complain of permanent distortions contracted by them in the effort to accommodate their osseous substructures to my Procrustean couches. Nothing could be more absurd. I suppose I ought to know what my own furniture is like, better than these anonymous critics; and I venture to say that the strictures in question were certainly never written by any person who had ever attended one of my wife’s At Homes, even for a single evening. The class of people who visit at the little house at Hampstead do not care to retail tittle-tattle about the private affairs of families as if they were writers in those well-known society journals, the ‘Weekly Eavesdropper’ and the ‘Pimlico Scorpion.’

Yet I fancy I can form some vague notion how so false an opinion has ever gained ground. It is based, I believe, in part upon the so-called Gothic furniture, once so largely recommended by Eastlake. Now, I believe Eastlake did a great deal of good in his own day; but I must admit that his Gothic chairs were decidedly knobby and angular. Perhaps some vague memory of these past phases in the nascent aesthetic movement may still

linger in the minds of my critics and censors. But I believe the error is far more due to certain stiff, square abominations, sold by certain West End upholsterers under the absurdly incongruous misnomer of Early English furniture. Early English in this acceptation appears to mean such a style as might, if persisted in, finally produce the well-known Anglo-Saxon attitudes to be found in certain mediæval tapestries. But that any recognised leader among the ‘aesthetes’—myself, for example, or Prigsby, or Partington—has ever given any countenance whatsoever to these prodigious and flimsy shams, I emphatically deny. If people will go to Mr. Zachariah Moss of Euston Road, or to Messrs. Shoddy, Shum, and Co. of Mile End, for their artistic upholstery, and will take whatever cheap and nasty goods those enterprising tradesmen choose to palm off upon them as ‘the new aesthetic style,’ or ‘the Early English drawing-room suite,’ why then they must not lay the blame of their failures upon me and Prigsby. But if they will come to us for advice and assistance, they will find that the true ‘aesthete’ values comfort and convenience above everything.

Last of all, there is an argument which many of my friends are fond of bringing up against me, and which Scrymgeour, of the ‘Weekly Bystander,’ never fails to air in every number. Whenever Scrymgeour meets me at the club, he says, ‘I tell you what it is, Brown; this thing isn’t going to last. It’s all very well as a passing fashion, but it won’t wear. Just you mark my words, my dear fellow—it won’t wear. Did you ever know any one fad or fancy last for ever? It’s just like Euphuism and Della Cruscanism—it will die out and be forgotten. Once upon a time fashionable people used to play croquet; then they took to playing badminton; now they play lawn tennis. Just so, once upon a time fashionable people used to be Evangelicals, and go to missionary meetings; then they took to being Anglicans, and went to matins; now they’re beginning to be aesthetic, and going to afternoon teas with Mrs. Brown at Hampstead. Depend upon it, the one fad will pass away like the others. Why, the women are beginning to wear red and blue dresses again already.’

Now, all that sounds very plausible, and in a certain sense it’s perfectly true. So far as this aesthetic movement is a mere fashion (as I allow it is with many people), it’s a fashion that will pass away like every other. But as to the notion of a great artistic awakening like this really dying out altogether, why, it’s simply absurd. People who talk like that don’t know what the aesthetic movement means. They think it is something connected with sage-green dresses, and sea-green complexions, and my wife’s afternoon teas. But I tell you it is something a great deal deeper

than that. In all great upheavals, there is much at which it is very easy for cheap satirists to laugh; but there is more in them, for all that, than the mere externals that the satirists seize upon. I have no doubt, when the Greek sculptors in the age of Pheidias began to model their statues from the living form, there were plenty of Scrymgeours at Athens who said this new style was all very well in its way, but they had no hesitation in saying people would go back before long to the fine old archaic stiffness of the *Ægina* marbles.

Well, it will be just the same, I believe, with this modern æsthetic movement. I tell you, it isn't such a skin-deep thing as superficial critics would have you believe; it's a real genuine artistic revolution, whose effects will last long after Maudle, and Postlethwaite, and Prigsby, and Partington, and your humble servant have been dead and forgotten for ages. I don't say there will be no changes of artistic fashion hereafter; on the contrary, there will be thousands. Why, we 'æsthetes' change oftener than anybody else, because we are always striving after improvement, and because our efforts are as yet for the most part purely tentative. But the great effect will remain in spite of all changes. The 'Gothic' revival has passed away; but it has culminated in the æsthetic revival. The æsthetic revival itself will pass away, so far as mere accidentals are concerned; but the change which it has accomplished in all our artistic ideas will be permanent. We may get new patterns for wall-papers to replace Mr. Morris's, but we shall never return to the old crudities of ten years since. Scrymgeour says the ladies are going back to the old reds and blues already; but he is wrong: the reds and blues of the reaction, even, are such colours as we never knew before the year One of the *Æsthetic Revolution*. They have a tinge of art in them to which we never were accustomed till Mr. Morris taught us to admire it.

There, then, you have my defence. I began half in joke: I end three-quarters in earnest. The principles which have been associated with the modest name of Cimabue Brown are principles which will go on living in spite of the ridicule of Mr. Punch, perhaps even to some extent by the aid of that ridicule. I told you at the beginning that I was not ashamed to avow myself by my own name: I will add now that I am proud to have performed my little part in attuning the lives of some thousands of Englishmen and Englishwomen to a higher, a sweeter, and a lovelier key. And if any of you care to drop in any Wednesday evening at the small house at Hampstead, I'm sure Mrs. Cimabue Brown will be only too delighted to make your acquaintance.

Rambles round Harrow.

III.

WATFORD, according to Mr. House of Culham College, derives its name partly from Watling Street and partly from a ford over the Colne, and it carries on a rather large trade; the local requirements also are very considerable, as the easy access to London has made it a favourite resort of the wealthier classes whose avocations lie in the metropolis. There are some iron-foundries in it, and one or two picturesque paper-mills. Silk also is manufactured at some mills here; and it has often occurred to me that cottagers might greatly



increase their resources by keeping silk-worms. They are easily attended to, and produce a certain crop.

The French have long been alive to the value of silk-worm culture, and the industry which so characterises the peasantry of that country, and enables them to send eggs and poultry to England, also enables them to supply us with silk; and so the mills on the Colne might be the means of greatly increasing the income of the rustic population. The mulberry on which the silk-worms feed is a hardy plant, which, though it grows in the tropics, will also resist the cold of the Hebrides; and though silk-worms will readily devour lettuce-leaves, mulberry is their very best food, and that too which produces the best silk. This is not the place to enter upon the

culture of these little creatures, but, in a word, it is work for which women and children are peculiarly adapted, and cocoons might easily be raised along the runs of a farm-house, where they would be out of the way, and bring in a handsome return.

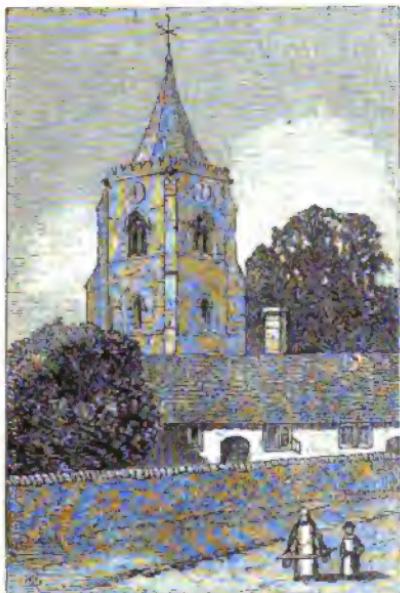
But the most interesting industry in this part of Hertfordshire is the fruit-cultivation. The apple and cherry orchards have no superiors in England, and the loose soil is admirably adapted for the production of early vegetables; indeed, some of those that we see in gardens round Watford are the finest that are sent to Covent Garden. The straw-platting has declined here, and has removed to Rickmansworth and other centres. We notice but few sheep and oxen, but the reason is that the grass land is principally used for raising hay, and not for pasturage. Very little land is allowed to lie waste, and the facility with which the best market in England can be reached has always made agriculture a profitable occupation. Malting is carried on to a considerable extent, and the country ale is said to be very excellent—a verdict which, if the judgment of the writer were worth recording on such a subject, he would readily confirm. In no part of England do wall-fruit attain greater perfection than in the southern part of this county, and in a favourable year the magnum bonum plums and apricots and nectarines are a perfect show along the garden walls. The grapes and fig gardens, however, that flourished during the palmy days of St. Albans Abbey, have given way to other and perhaps more indigenous fruit.

The very largest parsley in England is grown in some of the gardens of Watford, though when the plants are taken to other soil they begin to deteriorate in size and strength. It is perhaps to be regretted that grapes have ceased to be cultivated, as the soil is so admirably adapted for them, and resembles the beds of Rudesheimer, and other good vineyards.

From Watford begins a succession of parks and great country seats, and the lanes are hardly equalled for rich sylvan beauty in any part of England. If we take a parallelogram from Hatfield to Rickmansworth, six miles broad—which would be, in other words, a rectangle of fourteen miles by six—we should include no fewer than five noble seats, whose joint grounds would cover eight square miles; and when we remember that a public road lies through the middle of four of these, we can understand the sylvan delights we may expect. Nor can I ever understand the feelings that prompt people to call these wasted lands. Plough up Stonehenge, and the hundreds of thousands of acres of waste lands, and rich marshes, and commons, before doing so; and even then it is doubtful if these parks are not as productive as any agricultural

land. New varieties of fruit, and new varieties of every kind of vegetable, are husbanded and perfected ; wealth and care and seclusion are all at command for them ; and the results, when they are useful, soon find their way into the public service ; so that, with improved seeds and roots, a cottager's plot may yield nearly as much produce again as it did half a century ago. And when we

come to the item of live stock, the benefit is still greater. In the days of our ancestors, the kine of England were lean and ill-favoured ; we should not see the like ‘in all the land for badness :’ but now all is changed, and the cattle of even small farmers are ‘well-favoured and fat-fleshed.’ The sheep also of our ancestors were hardly better than the mountain flocks of the remotest parts of the island, but now they have been transformed just as completely in their quality as the cattle have ; and as for poultry, their improvement in size and in productiveness is quite as conspicuous. Of



Watford Church.

course the changes spoken of are for the most part perfected in what is called the Hall Farm, but it is absurd to suppose the parks themselves are unproductive. The herds of clean shapely cattle that we see in them, sheltering from the summer sun under spreading elms or beeches, find their way to Leadenhall, and indeed to the principal markets of England, according to the county they are situated in. The same of the sheep. And even the deer are not useless cumberers of the ground ; they too, in their measure, add to the food of the county. As for the other uses of such parks as we are considering—especially if the public have a road through them, which is the rule, and certainly not the exception—the advantages are great indeed. Gilpin in his ‘Forest Scenery’ says : ‘It is no exaggerated praise to call a tree the grandest and most beautiful of all the productions of the earth. In the former of these epithets nothing contends with it, for we consider rocks and mountains as part of the earth itself ; and though among inferior plants, shrubs,

and flowers there is great beauty, yet when we consider that these minuter productions are chiefly beautiful as individuals, and are not adapted to form the arrangements of composition in landscape, nor to receive the effect of light and shade, they must give place in point of beauty—of picturesque beauty, at least, which we are here considering—to the form, foliage, and ramification of a tree.' All this is just, and well told; and we may go even further, and say that the private parks within reach of Harrow and London have cheered and helped many a sojourner in the metropolis, when he has sought their delights at the end of a summer's day, and allowed his faculties to revive and expand for another struggle in the battle of life. In speaking of fine parks it is not, however, to be understood that these are all or nearly all of the country residences in the vicinity. Round Aldenham especially are many mansions and parks, and there are many neatly kept grounds that are seen from the road all the way from Watford Station to Hemel Hempstead. Cashiobury Park, which commences at Watford, is, like the others in the neighbourhood, splendidly wooded; the hall stands on the site of a more ancient one that was demolished at the first part of the present century. There is, I believe, no drawing of the old one preserved. The present building is the work of Wyatt, and it is very characteristic of the man. Had he lived when Gothic principles were better understood, he would not have put up so dreary a pile; but his best efforts were in classic architecture. The house is built round a quadrangle court, and exposes a front of ten windows wide to the broad lands of the park. The front is feeble and unpleasant, but the arrangements internally are on a noble scale. At one side of the house is an elm tree of great beauty, and on the other, a little in front, is a cedar of Lebanon of grand proportions. There are many well-known pictures in the gallery, which have become familiar to all the world through engravings; and is it not delightful to think that ancestral homes are so often the luxurious resting-places of pictures that are secure from danger, and speak yet from their canvas? But as far as the exterior of Cashiobury is concerned, there is little that would accord with our present notions of Tudor architecture. The adaptation of sash windows to Gothic heads is not, and cannot be, successful. Sash-windows are themselves not only the most clumsy of all modern contrivances, and the most signally inconvenient, but they must mar the symmetry of a Tudor window, which is intended only for shapely, handy casements. Wyatt showed an early aptitude for art, and Lord Bagot was at the cost of sending him to Italy to study. The Pantheon in Oxford Street seems to have been the crowning-piece of his fame and fortune, and on the death

of Sir William Chambers he was appointed surveyor to the Board of Works.

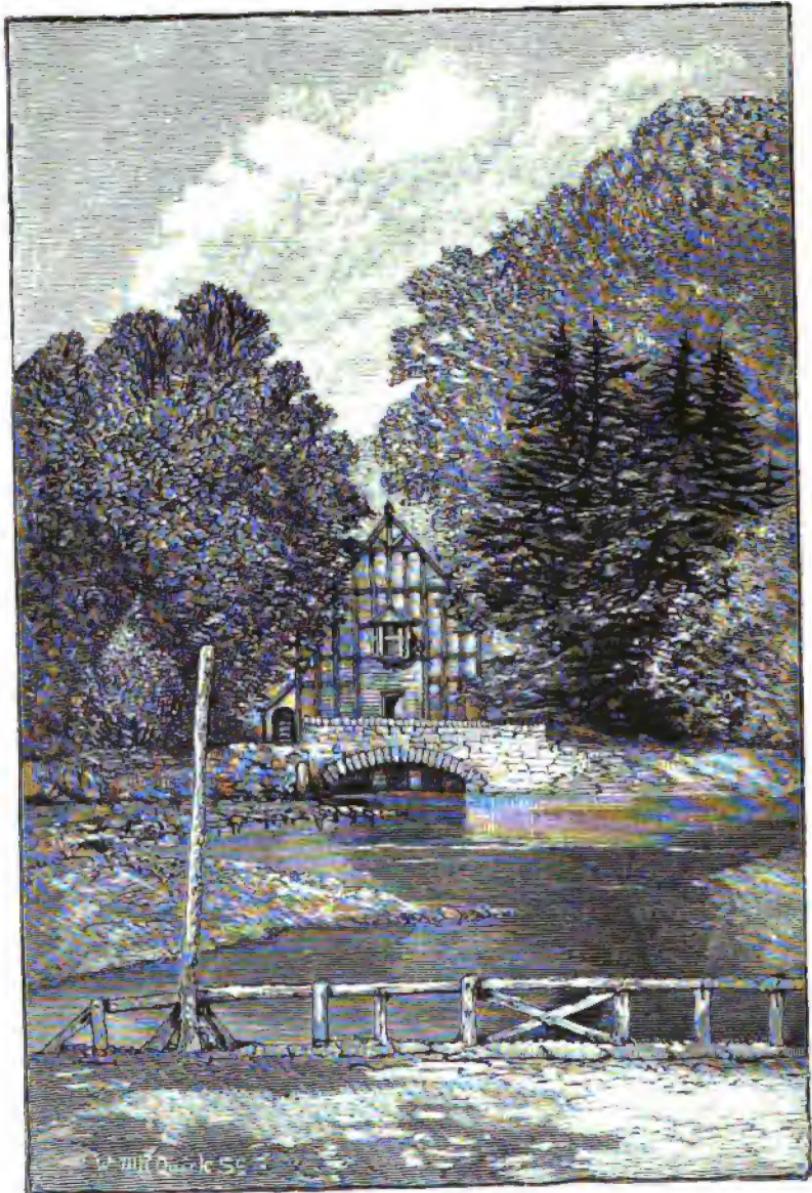
Lord Arthur Capel, the only son and heir of Sir Henry Capel, had an eventful career. He was noted for his hospitality and his many charities, and was chosen to represent Hertford in Parliament. At the breaking out of the Civil War, he supported the Parliament, and voted for the execution of Strafford; but he seems to have turned round, and raised a troop for the King. He fought with great valour, but finally had to capitulate, and retired to his estate at Hadham, and in Hadham Church is his monument. Unhappily for himself, he ventured to try his success again, and was compelled to surrender to Fairfax. Sir Charles Lucas and Sir George Lisle were shot, and the Lord of Cashiobury committed to the Tower. It is said that some angry speeches between him and Ireton sealed his fate. But however true this may be, he was brought to trial, and condemned for heading another outbreak of Royalists. He was sentenced to be hung, drawn, and quartered, but this shocking sentence was commuted to beheading, and he met his end with the same valour that he had shown through his eventful life. Some verses that he wrote in the Tower found their way into the 'Gentleman's Magazine' of 1757, and they are deservedly admired :

That which the world miscalls a jail
 A private closet is to me,
 Whilst a good conscience is my bail,
 And innocence my liberty.
 Locks, bars, and solitude together met
 Make me no prisoner, but an anchoret.

Where sin for want of food must starve,
 Where tempting objects are not seen,
 And these strong walls do only serve
 To keep rogues out, and keep me in—
 Malice is now grown charitable sure,
 I'm not committed, but I'm kept secure.

I'm in this cabinet locked up,
 Like some high-prized *margarite*,
 Or like some great mogul or pope
 I'm cloistered up from public sight.
 Retir'dness is a part of majesty,
 And thus, proud Sultan, I'm as great as thee.

These manacles upon mine arm
 I as my mistress' favours wear,
 And for to keep my ankles warm
 I have some iron shackles there.
 These walls are but my garrison, this cell
 Which men call jail, doth prove my citadel.



Mill at Cashiobury.

Although I cannot see my King,
 Neither in person or in coin,
 Yet contemplation is a thing
 That renders what I have not, mine :
 My King from me no adamant can part,
 Whom I do wear engraven in my heart.

Have you not heard the nightingale
 A prisoner close kept in a cage,
 How she doth chant her wonted tale
 In that her narrow hermitage ?
 Even that her melody doth plainly prove
 Her boughs are trees, her cage a pleasant grove.

After his death, it was discovered that he had left a request in his papers that his heart should be buried near the king's, and it was finally deposited at his estate at Hadham. The history of his son Arthur is even more dramatic. The estates of Cashiobury were sequestered, but after the restoration of Charles II. they were again returned to him. He filled many high offices with ability and with credit, and was one of those concerned in what is commonly called the 'Rye House Plot ;' and though he had opportunities of escape offered, he preferred to remain in prison and share the fortunes of his friend Lord Russell, fearing that his flight might injure his cause. He was found dead in prison, and some attempt was made to show that he fell by his own hand, but this was not credited at the time.

The water-mill at Cashiobury, which forms the subject of the opposite plate, is very beautiful. It would seem, indeed, to have fallen into disuse, and to be retained simply for its picturesqueness ; and it would be well if similar consideration were shown to other objects, where not actually in the way, that they might continue to delight the passer-by. A valuable collection of drawings or lithographs might easily be made of water-mills in different parts of England and Wales : I can recall several, perhaps nearly a dozen, that I remember to have seen during midsummer holidays, when, as a boy, it was my delight to take a knapsack, and wander without any direct aim—except, perhaps, to reach a trout stream—wherever fate or fancy led the way ; and though that is many years ago, I can hardly join in the reminiscences of those who say that once the sun shone more brightly, and the larks and thrushes were more musical. Watford mill is of considerable antiquity, and resembles the beautiful one in Gresford Vale, near Llangollen. The latter is more ancient, and is one of the few black-and-white ones that are left in the country. The road through Cashiobury Park is quite free, and the mill is reached easily from the Watford Lodge by keeping to the left after a few minutes' walk from the Lodge

gates. If we take the canal bank through Cashiobury, and proceed in a northerly direction, we shall arrive at another mill on a much larger scale. It is also very picturesque and pleasant, and much of its charm in summer weather is owing to the volume of clear water that we see flowing past, and which never seems to fail :—

Though deep, yet clear; though gentle, yet not dull;
Strong without rage; without o'erflowing, full.

The road which we shall arrive at is the delightful lane which separates Cashiobury from Grove Park, the seat of the Earl of Clarendon; and if at the end of a ten or twelve minutes' walk we take the lane on the left, we shall arrive at five lane-ends, of which the most southerly takes us past Chandler's Cross, and Red Heath, and through Coxley Green to the old-fashioned town of Rickmansworth, which is very well worth a visit as a specimen of a small market centre. It is on low marshy lands that lie near the confluence of the Gade and the Colne, and these rivers have between them five channels as they pass the town, but reunite outside. There are many curious and interesting associations with Rickmansworth, which formerly belonged to the Abbey of St. Albans, and is noticed in Dugdale as part of the vast possessions of that establishment. We read of what seems a small privilege in these days—a weekly market, which, though any village may now enjoy it, on its own responsibility, and without let or hindrance, seems, by a singular anomaly, to be hedged about with pains and penalties when the metropolis of Great Britain—the largest market, without any exception, in the world is concerned; though, indeed, it would almost seem that Londoners should claim the first relief. The manor of Rickmansworth belonged to Ridley, Bishop of London, who went to the stake with Latimer; and by a singular freak of fortune it was afterwards conferred upon Bonner, who, whatever attempts may have been made to whitewash him, was at least a bitter persecutor, though it would be unjust to say that he was as dead to every feeling of human kindness as was Gardiner. The old records of Rickmansworth abound with curious interest, for on the death of Bonner it reverted to the crown, and it was sold, or perhaps mortgaged, to Sir John Fotherly, whose son was the high sheriff of the county in the reign of Charles II. His end was a tragic one indeed, for he happened to visit Jamaica with his only daughter, and they were both engulfed in the terrible earthquake which in the reign of William III. spread disaster over nearly all the island; and then the manor, which had lapsed, became the property of Mr. Fotherly Whitfield, the nephew of this gentleman. The church is a plain and roomy building, and consists of the usual appliances to an ecclesiastical edifice: nave, aisles, chancel, and a handsome

embattled tower of hewn flints at the west end. This style of building in flint is always local, and it would seem to be quite indestructible ; walls stand as firmly and are as ‘plumb’ as they were the day they were built. The interior of Rickmansworth Church is also very interesting from the number of monumental stones it contains. On one is, ‘Here lyes in hope of a joyfull resurrection, ye Body of ye Rt. Honourable Henry Cary. Baron of Lepington, Earl of Monmouth (sone of Robert, Earl of Monmouth, and Elizabeth Trevanian, his wife, wh. Robert was ye 10th sone of Henry, Baron of Hunsdon). He died ye 17th day of June, An^o. Dn^t. 1661. aged 65 years. He was married 41 years to the Lady May Cranfield, eldest daughter of Lionell, Earle of Middlesex, and had by her 10 children, two sonnes and eight daughters, viz.; Lionell the eldest (never married), was slayn Anno Dn^t. 1664 at Marston Moor fight in his Ma.^{tes} service, and Henry who died of y^e small pox, An^o. Dn^t. 1649, and lyes interred at the Savoye. He left no issue but one sonne, since deceased, also y^e last heir male of this Earle’s familie.’ . . . This is only half of the inscription, and it is given here merely as a most characteristic specimen of the monumental records of the period, which in many cases would seem almost to have been expected to answer for reference where records in church folios were so loosely made and loosely kept.

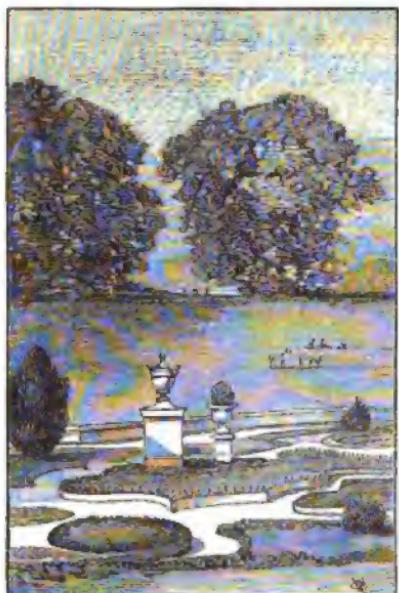
Close to Rickmansworth lies the entrance to Moor Park, which was also anciently a parcel of the overspreading Abbey of St. Albans ; and we cannot sufficiently regret the destruction of a monument that lay, indeed, a little out of our radius, but was worthy, it is said, of the wealthiest abbey in England, and that is, the Eleanor Cross that stood a few inches to the north of Watford, and near the vast Abbey Church of St. Peter’s. It is by no means improbable that portions of this are buried and now exist, and that at some future time they may be discovered in an unlikely or likely place, and joined together again. It was my lot to be employed in writing an account of the stone crosses of England some few years ago, and especially did the Eleanor ones claim attention for their unrivalled beauty ; though three only remain, it seemed a certainty that the nine others are not all destroyed ; and since writing these accounts, no less than three carved crosses have been unearthed in different parts of England, and sketches sent to me. None of them, of course, were Eleanor ones, but it is very probable that if we could know what lies only a few feet under the ground, the excursionists from Harrow would find another cross besides Waltham within their easy reach, and that possibly a finer one. Some of the tenants of the Abbot of St. Albans, who held the manor by service, seem to have been rather of the Land-League

fraternity, and entered unreasonable objections : thus one Fleet refused either to pay quit rents or to perform the covenanted services ; though indeed, one was only to find a nag-horse to carry the Abbot, or any of his successors, to Tynemouth whenever they should visit that cell ; and if we consider the time this would have occupied, and the great inconvenience in those days, we cannot think exaction very extortionate.

Ralph the Boteler, the Lord of Sudeley, who is the hero of a somewhat romantic ballad, was the next owner, and among subsequent possessors was George Neville, Archbishop of York, a brother of the great Earl of Warwick, who, according to Godwin,

built a house here, long since demolished. Edward IV. was often entertained here, and a curious tale is told by Godwin as occurring shortly before the defeat and death of his brother.

'The archbishop was hunting with the king at Windsor, when he made relation to him of some extraordinary kind of game wherewith he was wont to solace himself at a house which he had built, and furnished sumptuously, called the Moor, in Hertfordshire. The king seeming desirous to be a partaker of this sport, appointed a day when he would come hither and hunt, and make merry with him. Thereupon the archbishop, taking

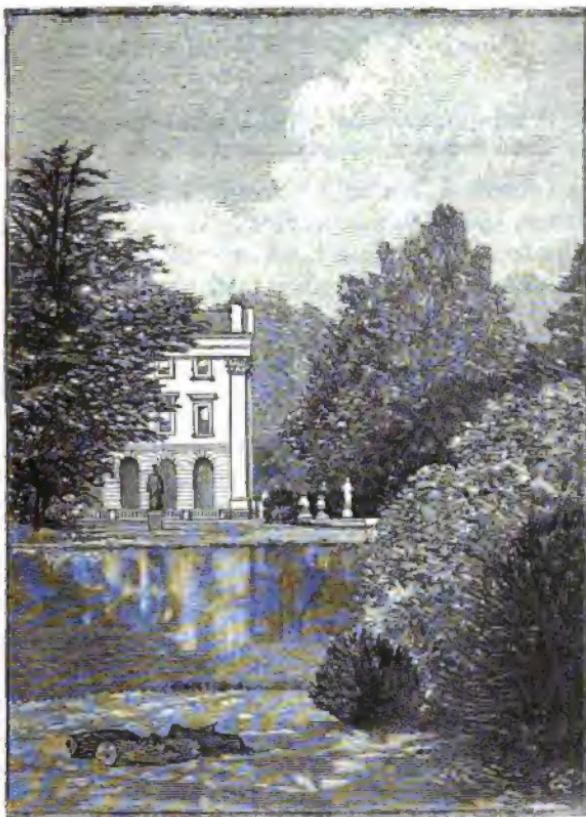


Moor Park.

his leave, got him home, and thinking to entertain the king in the best manner possible for him, he sent for much plate that he had hid during the wars, and also borrowed much of his friends. The deer which the king hunted with being thus brought into the toils, the day before his appointed time he sent for the archbishop, commanding him, all excuses set apart, to repair presently to him at Windsor. As soon as he came, he was arrested of treason ; all his money, plate, and moveables to the value of 20,000*l.* seized upon for the king, and himself a long space after was kept prisoner at Calais and Guisnes : during which time, the king took upon himself all the profits and temporalities of the bishopric. Among other things then taken from him, he had a mitre of inestimable value, by reason of many rich stones wherewith it was adorned ;

that the king broke, and made thereof a crown for himself.' Henry, in his 'History of Great Britain,' vol. ix. p. 203, records that as Edward was dining one day with the archbishop, he was privately informed that he was that day to be put to death, on which he immediately rose, and departed to Windsor.

The history of Moor Park is extremely interesting, and, indeed, it is connected with many events in history. Formerly it belonged to the Duke of Monmouth, having been purchased by him from



Moor Park.

the Earl of Ossory. He was, it is curious to note, one of three scions of the House of Stuart who, within a period of ninety-eight years, met with death by the hand of the public executioner. Without going through the lists of each proprietor, it is interesting to know that at one time Moor Park was purchased by Lord Anson, after his return from the Ladrones, of which islands he has left so charming an account. He would have little difficulty in purchasing the estate after the prize-money which he took from

the Spanish treasure-ship which he intercepted, when thirty-two waggons, well escorted, were required to bring the spoil from Spithead to London. Moor Park belonged also to Sir Lawrence Dundas at one time, and again to Mr. Robert Williams, the eminent London banker, and now is owned by Lord Ebury, whose name has been so often before the public as a philanthropist, and who is an uncle of the present Duke of Westminster.

Formerly there was a hill before the house, but this was levelled by one of the proprietors of the mansion who had acquired an immense fortune thro' a judicious sale of shares in the South Sea scheme. Pope in his 'Moral Essays' alludes to this circumstance :

Or cut wide views through mountains to the plain,
You'd wish your hill a sheltered seat again.

'This,' Pope observed in a note, 'was done in Hertfordshire by a wealthy citizen, by which means, merely to overlook a dead plain, he let in the north wind upon his house and parterre, which were before adorned and defended by beautiful woods.' Upon this note Britton observes with great justness, 'Satirists are generally more severe than just, and Pope is not an exception; his dead plain conveys an idea of sterility and loneliness, which the prospect itself belies. It opens rather upon a fertile vale animated by the meanderings of the Gade and Colne rivers, and rendered beautiful by a luxuriance of verdure intermingled with noble seats, villages, and farm houses, together with the towns of Rickmansworth and Watford.' Mr. Styles, the fortunate seller-out of South Sea stock, it was who built the present mansion, and he employed for the purpose the then celebrated architect Giacomo Leoni, a Venetian architect who was formerly in the service of the elector palatine of Germany. He settled in England, and wrote a very excellent edition of Palladio in 1742, and was employed by Mr. Styles for the building of Moor Park. The house as the Duke of Monmouth left it was a brick building, though of no inconsiderable dimensions. Sir James Thornhill painted the saloon, and acted as surveyor for the building. His paintings are a good example of the pseudo-classic taste of the period. In the hall are paintings to represent the story of Io and Argus as told by Ovid in the first book of the 'Metamorphoses,' even to the last scene where Mercury appears, to cut off the head of Argus :—

Without delay his crooked falchion drew,
And at one fatal stroke the keeper slew,
And all his hundred eyes with all their light
Are closed at once in one perpetual night :
These Juno takes, that they no more may fail,
And spreads them in her peacock's gaudy tail.

Some doubt is expressed as to the actual artist, but it is much in Thornhill's style. The cost of the building was 150,000*l.*, and the carriage of stone from London amounted to the enormous sum of 14,000*l.* But other, and almost equally extravagant, sums were afterwards spent upon this place by Lord Anson and Sir Lawrence Dundas. Mr. Rous, an East Indian director, had possession for a short time, but his means were not equal to the strain of keeping up such a great estate, and he pulled down the wings to sell the building materials! He had hoped to be a member of the Board of Control under Mr. Fox's celebrated Indian bill, but he was doomed to disappointment. In the west wing which he pulled down lay the bodies of Mr. and Mrs. Styles. They were buried in the magnificent chapel, and now they lie under a grass plot at the west end of the house. One of the wings pulled down contained the chapel, and the other the offices, and they were united with the main building by a fine Tuscan colonnade. The central part of this mansion was, however, untouched, and it forms one of the finest seats in Hertfordshire. The saloon, the library, and the ball-room or long drawing-room are all on a grand scale, and the author of the 'Beauties of England and Wales' very simply says of the ceiling of the latter: 'It was one of the finest works of Sir James Thornhill, but was copied from one of Guido's at the Respiigliari palace. Sir James was paid 3,500*l.* for executing it, but not until he had established its value by the testimony of some of the most celebrated artists in a court of justice.' The park is extremely beautiful, and if a nightingale is to be heard anywhere it is there. It is said that the oak trees have begun to fade and decay from the top, and this would give credence to the generally received belief that the Duchess of Monmouth, after her husband's execution, caused the tops of all the oaks in the park to be cut off. Lord Anson destroyed the pleasure ground so much praised by Sir William Temple, and laid out the present one, and his planting of foreign trees and shrubs greatly enriches the beauty of the park. The kitchen garden also was not neglected, and here the far-famed 'Moor Park apricot' was perfected. Brown, commonly known as 'Capability Brown,' was the surveyor employed by Lord Anson to effect the improvements, and it is probable that they will rank among his best works.

ALFRED RIMMER,

(To be continued.)

John Calthorpe's Theft.

I.

JOHN CALTHORPE had been up and about his farm since dawn. *His* farm ! The farm which had been rented by a Calthorpe since the country could remember would know the Calthorpes no more. Calthorpe of Hazleby had failed ; and as he wandered about, a grey, silent man, on this the day of the sale of his farm stock and implements, he wondered in a half-absent way what he would be called in the neighbouring town, where he was going to wear out his broken life. ‘Calthorpe of Hazleby’ would be heard no more. Hazleby Farm, with its swelling uplands, and flat, juicy meadows, with its stout old barn and byre, its stacks of corn and its ridges of roots, its cool dairy and its snug dwelling-house, with its steep red roof, spotted here and there with lichen and tufts of grass, which Calthorpe now regarded as tenderly as we regard a mole or a freckle on a much-loved face ! Yes, *Hazleby* and *Calthorpe* were to be for ever divorced ! He blamed not the landlord, who had given him notice to quit because he was in arrears ; he blamed not the seasons which had long been unfavourable to him ; he blamed not the friends who had been chary of help. No, he blamed not any one of them ; but he felt they were all against him, and he had a grudge against them all.

As he took this last round before the bustle and trampling of the day should begin—bidding a silent farewell to the horses in the stable (which scarcely paused in their munching to turn their heads), to the five or six cows left in the byre, and to the old store-pig (which probably in a day or two would be in the process of becoming bacon)—he gave less sign of emotion than the old sheep-dog that walked despondently at his heels. You would have said, had you seen him, he was a grey, hard, silent man, and no more. It was true he had no passion in his heart, only a bitter hopelessness of life. The change from prosperity to poverty, and from that to bankruptcy, had not been sudden and tragic ; it had been, as it almost always is with the farmer, long-drawn-out and passionless—almost imperceptible, like the processes of Nature. For fifteen years difficulties and losses had been closing in upon him, slowly drawing the colour from his life, nerve from his purpose, and love from his heart. His wife had died, and his son, and he had scarcely felt their death ; but still he got harder, and greyer, and more silent. Not even had this divorce between himself and

Hazleby had anything dramatic and moving. It was six months since he had received his notice to quit, and during all that time he had been parting from the land and homestead of his fathers. There was in this nothing to stir the blood one way or the other, nothing to relieve the heart. A violent convulsion of pain, even though it should threaten the life, would be better than this dull, deadening change.

As he turned out of the byre a young woman with a sweet, grave, pale face came to the kitchen-door to shake some small white thing. She caught his eye.

'Won't you come in to breakfast, father?' said she; 'it's been ready some time.'

'And we needna let it waste,' said he, wiping his feet on the grass-plot preparatory to coming in; 'there'll be mair waste the day,' continued he as he entered the kitchen, 'than we would mak' in a month, wi' their crammin' and guzzlin' at t' beef and t' ham and t' beer.'

'I suppose we must set it out for them, father?' said she interrogatively. 'The sale would come to nothing if we didn't.'

'Ay, lass,' said he, 'it's an au'd custom, and a Calthorpe o' Hazleby maunna fa' oot wi' t.'

'Mr. Coverley'—and as she uttered the name she glanced down at her tea-cup, and there came the faintest accession of colour to her cheek—'Mr. Coverley has promised to keep an eye on things and see that these men that come about sales only to be fed don't get more than is good for them.'

'Damn Coverley! Let Coverley mind's ain business. I dean't want to hear nou't about Coverley. If it hadna been for Coverley, there needna ha' been a sale at all. Now! An' that thoo knows. What has Coverley to do wi' it?' And Calthorpe scowled angrily at his daughter.

'Aren't you rather unreasonable, father?' said the girl with some colour and trepidation, which seemed to show that she was venturing into argument, not out of perversity, but from a desire to defend one whom it pained her to find misunderstood. 'It surely wasn't altogether his fault that he did not take over the stock and things when he took the farm; if our valuer valued at more than his valuer, and we would not agree to split the difference; well, you see, father, Mr. Coverley's a man of business.'

'Ay, sure, Coverley is. Damn him! He tak's farm as has been in our family time oot o' mind—tak's it as soon 's he hears I'm turned oot—and tak's it at thety pound mair rent, as if he knawed better nor me what was good land, and could mak' a livin' wheer I couldna!'

'But you know, father, we *have* let the place go down very much.'

'Speak for thasén [thyself]! Thoo'l't tell me next I know nou't about farmin'. I dean't know, I s'pose, atween a tup or a wether, or atween a cow-tail and a plough-tail! Weel, theer! But what must conter me aboot Coverley for?' 'Cod! Art sweet on t' chap? Eh?'

She rose without a word, but with a rare flush upon her cheek, and began to clear the breakfast things away. Her father followed her about with his eyes for some moments, and then turned to look out of window. His daughter might be 'sweet upon' Coverley, but he could not for an instant imagine that Coverley could be 'sweet upon' her. How should a good-looking, prosperous young man like George Coverley, who might have the pick of farmers' or tradesmen's daughters the country round,—how should he think of a pale, hard-worked slip of a girl without a penny? John Calthorpe's disposition and experience were not of a kind to bring him within sight of such a guess as this. George Coverley might be a man of shrewd insight and generous heart, who saw in this thin, lonely slip of a Jenny such a woman as would with cherishing become the one sweet and gracious flower of a man's life. Her kindness, patience, and resolution were manifest; there was sufficient hint about the lines of her figure that with a life less anxious and toilsome it would show a fine, graceful womanliness; and her rude probation in her father's house would be worth more to a husband than a thousand pounds.

'Tom,' shouted Calthorpe, pushing the windows open and addressing a passing farm-servant, 'thoo'l't need to mak' that mare look some smarter afore t' sale. And thoo and Harry clear out that — Stop; I'm coming out. Thool't get the tables set oot as soon 's thoo can, wean't thee, ooney?' he said to his daughter in passing.

'Yes, father,' said she without turning. She continued slowly rinsing and drying her cups and saucers and plates, with her eyes fixed absently through the window on the bright, breezy prospect of wold and dale which she was to part from so soon. Was there in her heart just a faint suspicion, a warm trembling of hope that some day she might return to it? There was a footstep in the matted passage, but she did not hear it. A well-set-up male figure in light tweed coat and gaiters appeared at the door behind her and paused. But she did not feel its presence. The young man took off his hat, and made at first as if he would tap on the door with the handle of his riding-whip; but he refrained from that and at once stepped into the kitchen,

whose sanded floor grated beneath his foot. Jenny turned at once.

'Mr. Coverley! how you did make me start!' said she with a little pant of a laugh.

'Did I?' said he seriously. 'I knocked at the outer door, but nobody came; so I walked in. I hope I have not startled you much,' glancing at the pale face.

'Oh dear, no. Won't you sit down?'

'Thank you; I'd rather stand here, while you—I suppose you've things to do?'

'A great many.'

'Well, don't let me hinder. I wouldn't have come until sale-time; but there is something I want to say, and I knew there would be no chance of finding you alone unless I came early.'

She hastily carried off her cups and plates to the cupboard, to hide the signs of confusion which she felt were appearing in her face. What was he going to say? How could he say it such a long way off?

'Miss Calthorpe,' he continued, while she listened with a beating heart, and, though her crockery was put away, she did not dare to return nearer to him, 'I've been thinking that you and your father must feel it very hard to leave this place. I, you know, could never have a feeling of that kind; I have not been brought up for several generations in any one place'—she could not help a little laugh at this curious turn of speech—'I mean, of course, that I was brought up in a town, that I have lived here and lived there, and have only taken to farming as a business. But I think I can guess a little of what you must feel; and your father.'

'Yes; father, I am sure, feels it very hard. But it is not his way to say much.'

'Well, I was thinking, if he would like to stay about the place, there is the old homestead, now, across there by the meadows.'

She looked at him in surprise; could he really suppose her father—Calthorpe of Hazleby—would be willing to settle down as a dependent on the farm which had been his own?

'Oh, no, Mr. Coverley,' said she, 'that would never do, thank you.'

'I thought not,' said he in the same even, pursuant tone. 'Well, there is another way, I—I think.'—He now began to hesitate. 'He need not go out of this house at all. I—I—'

She was forced to look straight at him again, for his meaning was not clear. Their eyes met; she understood him fully. With a deep blush she fluttered away on the impulse, stammering, 'I—

I must go and lay the tables.' And though he looked strong and resolute, he was really too shy and diffident to detain or to follow her.

He slunk away out, and along a by-path, 'sure'—yet not convinced—that he had made an egregious blunder. How could he ever face her again? He tramped about, wreaking a terrible revenge with his riding-whip on all the nettles and brambles that came within his reach. He became gradually more of his composed, shrewd self—a result to which the brisk, fragrant October breeze which poured steadily down from the moor agreeably contributed. And he was on his own farm! He had almost forgotten that. What a pleasant place it was! But how much pleasanter it would be if— He must, he would make her its mistress. He wandered on for some time, without observing where he was going, in a condition of reverie with which all lovers are familiar. He turned, and observed that he was at a more considerable height than he had guessed. He overlooked the farmstead. The rattle and creak of assembling carts and other vehicles rose faintly to his ear, and the echo of loud bucolic laughter and of rough rustic talk. He descended to be in time for the beginning of the sale, and to keep his word that he would give an eye to the feeding.

The redoubtable Mr. Postlethwaite, auctioneer and valuer, was drinking his first glass of brandy and water, and gave him as he approached a pointed nod as a man of marked consequence.

'Just arrove in time, Mr. Coverley.' Coverley glanced uneasily round and along the tent, at the entrance of which they were standing, to make sure *she* was not within hearing. 'A fine day and a good company—as George there said to Molly when he got her behind the haystack.' He threw this morsel over his shoulder to the men in moleskins or smocks and clayey boots and leggings, who looked up to Postlethwaite as the wisest and wittiest of men, and now laughed consumedly and dug elbows into each other at his joke about 'Gearge.' 'Oh, yes; we'll have a capital sale. Got a catalogue, Mr. Coverley, of course? No? John, give Mr. Coverley a catalogue. What a damned fool,' continued he, coming closer and sinking his voice, 'Calthorpe was not to settle with you without this sale!'

'Yes. I'm sorry for him. I almost wish now I had come to his own terms. But even at that I believe he would think I was so ready because I was getting everything dirt-cheap. He's got no notion how prices have come down the last two or three years, and he's so suspicious.'

'That's him! That's just him! Suspicious, yes; as suspicious as an old woman. And prices! Lord bless you, how can he know

ou't about prices? He hasn't been to a market, as you say, for years, and he'd rather look at the devil than at an agricultural paper. And he forgets things. What d'ye think? It'll be four or five seasons syne that he sold a fine bull-calf for 10*l.* when I could have got 60*l.* or 90*l.*!'

'Why, how was that?'

'He forgot, or didna think it worth while to remember, its father was a pedigree bull! I'm afraid he's going here;—Postlethwaite tapped his own crumpled and lumpy forehead, and pursed his thick lips.—'But there! We maun begin.'

'Sale to begin, gentlemen!' shouted his clerk.

To those unaccustomed to such scenes there would have appeared no immediate sign of attending the summons; the scattered groups still continued the loud, heady political wrangle in the open, the enjoyment of some rare joke at the stable-door, the reflective prodding and scratching with sticks of the great sow, and the slow fumbling and shaking of some machine to test its joints; but the practised observer would have noted an outward look, a turn of the leg, a straightening of the back, which implied that the farmers in their way were preparing for business. The clerk evidently understood this: he did not shout again. By-and-by the groups loosened and drew towards Postlethwaite, but with a curious resistancy, as if ashamed to begin the game of bidding and buying.

Coverley noticed that Calthorpe was holding aloof, but within hearing; his daughter was not to be seen.

To enumerate the items and the progress of the sale would only weary the reader. Coverley, in his desire to serve Jenny's father, frequently bade for things he did not want in order to run up the price. As the sale proceeded, he grew puzzled to note how everything for which he had made a bid was knocked down to him, and to observe the odd, sidelong looks of his neighbours. It was a pity he was so young a farmer; it was, especially, a pity he knew so little of the time-honoured practice among the farmers of the district. It was the etiquette of such sales as this for the incoming tenant to hold aloof, even as the outgoing had to do,—a tacit rule of conduct derived, it would appear, by a sense of justice from an older rule that the incoming tenant should have all advantage. Conceive, then, what general opinion was forming of the young man who bade so greedily for almost everything! He himself began to see that somehow his endeavours were defeating his purpose, though he was not yet sufficiently acquainted with all the details of farming to know what bargains he had got. His bids became fewer and slacker. Of course, his neighbours thought the

reason of that was because he had got all he wanted. And in truth, he had—almost. There was but one item in the catalogue which interested him—‘A thoro’bred brood mare with foal’—and it was the last.

He turned away, out of hearing a little, to ruminant and to make pleasant pictures for himself of the future on the margin of which he stood—when the fences would not be, as now, trailing and rotten, nor the farmyard neglected and rank; when he would be master here, and would make everything trim and neat, not for the mere cold sake of trimness and neatness, but out of warm homage to the bright, careful mistress of the house, in thought of whom every toil would be a pleasure and the most sordid duty would become sacred.

Alas! poor young man! How he would have been stricken and dismayed could he have seen the little scene at that very moment being enacted in the kitchen!

Old Calthorpe sat with a crumpled, dirty catalogue and a stumpy pencil in his hand, making some calculation which moved him very much, and his daughter stood over against him with two fingers on her parted lips and an expression of wonder and grief in her open eyes.

‘The—the scoundrel!’ exclaimed the old man, beating his knee with his hand in a helpless, pathetic fashion. ‘The—the—the—,’ in a voice which rose as if it might break in tears. ‘Fifty pounds if a penny, wi’ his bidding and bidding! We haven’t so mich but that he might have let things bring a price amang th’ neighbours. Who would ha’ thought a young man that looks like him could be so fair mean and graspy? Happen he’ll come to nae good!’

The girl evidently could not trust herself to speak; she was overcome with wonder and doubt.

An hour or two later the last item was reached, and George Coverley resumed his station near the auctioneer in good time. It is odd that no created thing so excites the enthusiasm and the shrewdness (not to say the ‘smartness’) of a North-countryman as a horse or a dog. Another man may be indifferent to the points of a horse, a North-countryman never. When the mare, accompanied by her foal, was trotted in before the auctioneer, Coverley forgot his sweetheart and her father, everything but the handsome pair. What a graceful deer-like creature was the foal! How the mother stood staring round her and trembling! How clean and elegant were her limbs! What spring and speed there were in that long ‘pastern,’ and the fine muscle in the thigh down

to the hock! What spirit in the erect head, and in the tail, which did not hang limp and nerveless between the hips, as is the habit of most equine and vaccine tails, but which was curved as if in defiance! There was one thing Coverley did not like about her; she had a head somewhat too large and 'cartey' for the best breeding.

'Is there a pedigree?' he asked.

While the auctioneer was consulting with Calthorpe as to this, an old fellow, who was reputed to possess the fastest trotter in the district, stepped forward and lifted the mare's forefoot to tap the frog. She swung her head viciously round and seized the most obtrusive part of the man's garment. He dropped on his hands. Everybody laughed; it was the best joke of the day. The old fellow rose rather sulky, and turned away with—'She bain't no good. She bain't no good,' repeated he, when he had resumed his place and rubbed the dirt off his hands against her. 'And, as the saying is, if thou want to know what *he'll* be, ax his dam; so *he* bain't no good, nayther.'

'Is there a pedigree?' Coverley again asked.

'Mr. Calthorpe tells me, gentlemen, there is a pedigree, but he has mislaid it;' and the auctioneer made a grimace aside to his questioner. 'Trot her out again, Tom.'

'Pure?' asked Coverley. 'I don't like her head, you know; there's no breed in that. How old is she?' stepping forward and seizing her by the nostrils and the nether lip to look into her mouth.

'Four year old,' said Postlethwaite.

'Four?' exclaimed Coverley. 'She's seven, if she's a day!'

This was getting rather awkward. The crowd seemed to think that after all the young man was too curious in his inquiries—perhaps only making a display, since it was pretty certain the pair would be knocked down to him.

'A bid! A bid!' cried some.

'Twenty pounds,' said Coverley, returning to his place frowning. Had not a man the right to know what he was going to bid for?

'Who's t' young un by?' asked the old fellow whom the mare had treated with ignominy.

'Catastrophe,' said the auctioneer.

'How can that be?' said Coverley. 'Catastrophe, I know, has been in the south for the last three years.'

'Weel, a' right,' said the old fellow; 'never mind. Thetty pound.'

The bidding was between the old man and Coverley. In a

few seconds mare and foal were 'knocked down' to the latter for sixty pounds.

'Worth a hundred and twenty,' said the auctioneer, leaning forward as he left his place.

'I know it is too little for them. But why didn't they bid up?' said Coverley.

'Why didna' they bid up?' echoed the old man, bursting suddenly upon him. 'Theer now! he, he, he! theer be a good un!' "Bid up!" says he!'

Coverley was puzzled and hurt. If he had got them cheap, how could he help it?

The sale was now over, and the farmers before separating sauntered off to the tent for a second refreshment with the air of going nowhere in particular. Some walked to the place with a directness which was reckoned to show very bad breeding. Of these one was Coverley, and thus he deepened the impression against him in the minds of those who were to be his neighbours, and who at the best were prepared to be jealous of, and prejudiced against, an interloper like him. We of course know he was hastening to fulfil his promise to Jenny, to look after the eating and drinking, and perhaps to feast his eye with a sight of Jenny herself.

He took his place at the beef, and began cutting it, to the relief of several who stood round, but who looked vaguely about, ashamed to help themselves.

'It's a fine cut of beef,' said Coverley, pausing to sharpen his knife.

'Ay; but thoo'l get nane o't.'

Coverley turned and saw by his elbow old Calthorpe, with his head bare and his rough, grey hair rather disordered. His look was charged with anger and so seemed his tone; but since Coverley could guess no cause for this, he thought the words must be said in joke, and he uttered a little laugh. He was amazed to find that this irritated the old man.

'Let be!' cried he, when Coverley resumed the carving. 'What dost thoo want meddling wi' other folk's things? T' place bain't thine yet!'

'Oh!' said Coverley, not yet angry; he was too much surprised. He laid the knife and fork down and stood back. 'I only wanted to help.'

'Help, sayst tha?' And he fiercely flourished the knife about the steel. 'There's mair loss in thy help than in other folk's thieving! I want nae help fro' such as thoo!'

A painful silence prevailed. All eyes were fixed on the pair. In Coverley surprise and throbs of pain were fast giving place to

anger and mortification which swelled his heart and rose to his head. Why should the old man use him thus rudely? But he observed how the old hands trembled in their use of the knife and fork, and he pitied him. He remembered, too, what Postlethwaite had said about his wits going.

' You'd better let me do it,' said he; ' your hand shakes.'

Calthorpe took this as an insult, which was all the more unendurable because it was quietly given. He turned fiercely upon the young man, threatening him with the knife.

' Be off, or I'se lat you ha' this! You've nae right here till to-morrow. What didst come to-day for, but that thoo thought——'

' Father! Oh, father!' It was Jenny who came between them. She turned appealing with half down-cast eyes to Coverley. ' Go away. Don't anger him. He's not himself.'

' Ab,' cried the old man, ' thoo'lt side wi' t' fellar! wilt tha? Thoo'dst better gan wi' him, maybe.' She laid a gentle hand on his arm, and gave him a glance of entreaty. ' Weel, gan in wi' tha, then, and not come meddling here.'

Coverley stood silent. He could not resolve either to go or stay; he could not disregard Jenny's appeal, and yet how could he tamely turn tail and give no kind of answer to such unprovoked insult? A look from Jenny as she withdrew, and the words ' Do go!' which he saw form upon her lips, decided him, and he turned away saying:

' I don't see why you should insult me in this way, Calthorpe. But at your daughter's request I will go.'

' Ay, go! and the devil go wi' thee, thoo. . . . !' Poor Calthorpe fell to unpacking his heart with words of no very reputable kind, such as no one there had ever before heard him utter.

' The young man uses rare fine words,' said Long Ribston to his neighbour, when Coverley had disappeared, and the buzz of talk and the noises of feeding had been resumed. ' He's nae doubt weel eddicate and weel off. What an au'd ass Calthorpe is nae to ha' rayther tried to get him for a son-in-law!'

II.

CALTHORPE took up his residence in the little town in a little house by the railway station. On the lintel of the door speedily appeared the most insignificant bit of a signboard, scarcely bigger than that in which taverns and similar places of entertainment confess reluctantly and in the dimmest of letters that they are ' Licensed to sell beer, wines, and spirits.' John Calthorpe simply confessed himself a ' corn and coal merchant.'

This by no means implied that he had a store of these commodities somewhere or other, but merely that he sold them 'on commission.' The poor remnants of attention and energy John had did not work well in this new groove.

'I been so lang on t' land, ye see,' he would say to his daughter. 'And my eye and my fut's mair used to t' furrow. I can mak' nou't o' this. 'T would ha' been better I'd died on t' land. There'll be nou't but work'us aifter a'.'

'Don't talk like that, father,' Jenny would say. 'You know I make a nice little sum by teaching those children, and I can make ever so much by sewing in the evenings.'

'Not very much. Nay, my lass, I'd better ha' died. I'm fair feckless. I'm not just clean gone useless; I'm broken like a hollystick.'

But Jenny patiently and lovingly tended and cheered him. She provided for all his wants; she took care that he had his egg at breakfast, as he had been wont for many years, whether she had anything or no; she filled his pipe for him in the evening, and he never inquired where she got the tobacco.

Where did Jenny get the tobacco? Did she buy it? No. And certainly she did not beg or steal it. It was given to her by one who could not prevail on her to accept anything else—of a marketable value, that is—by a young man who might often be seen hanging patiently about a stile at the end of the railway lane, watching for the appearance of Jenny's figure, in the delightful hope of holding her firm, thin hand and of looking into her sweet, patient face,—by George Coverley, of course. For he would have been a lover unworthy of our notice if he had not at once found out Jenny in her obscure little home; and Jenny was a girl after our own heart, who, when her father suspected how it was, and declared with an oath that if she was 'sweet on that fellow, sh'd better ha' done,' and that she would be no more 'lass' of his if she ever spoke to him, remained silent, and continued loving her George and speaking to him when she had the chance just as before. The true heart will no more be dictated to than the true conscience; and when the bullying either of clergymen or of parents is answered by silence, they must not think that that means submission.

But it was evident, of course, to both that things could not go on thus. George was resolved to marry Jenny, with old Calthorpe's consent if he could get it, without if he could not; and Jenny was willing to marry George, but only if her father's objection could be overcome. That put the young man in motion; for he knew enough already of his Jenny to be sure that her resolve had not been taken hastily, and that it would be very difficult,

if not impossible, to make her let it go. So he arranged with Jenny to call on the afternoon of next market-day.

Calthorpe sat sucking his pipe and turning over in his heart his sour disappointments. He took his pipe from his mouth and stared when George Coverley was ushered by Jenny into the little room. She withdrew.

'I've come, Mr. Calthorpe,' said George, laying his overcoat on the back of a chair and sitting down a little awkwardly, 'to ask—'

'Thoo wertna asked to sit down,' said Calthorpe, stirring himself angrily.

'Well, no; but I suppose I may,'—with an attempt at a smile.

'Nay; thoo mayna. I dean't want to see thee or speak to thee. Thoo can go.'

'You are not civil. I'd rather go,' said the young man warmly, 'than stay near you. But I've promised Jenny'—the old man looked suspicious, and the young man drew out his handkerchief to blow his nose and compose himself—'to speak to you. We wish to have your consent to our marriage.'

Calthorpe stared.

'Weel! thoo dost beat the coolest o' cowcumbers! But see! if I had a dozen lasses to provide for, I wouldna give thoo one o' them! Now go!'

Coverley knew how deeply Jenny would feel her father's refusal, so he tried to remonstrate, to plead even, with the old churl, though it was much against his grain.

'Don't you think,' said he, 'you ought to take a little time to consider? I know that for some peculiar reasons you dislike me—'

'Ay; I do, I do. And my reasons is varry odd, as thoo says. Thoo'st been a counter-jumper or summat, and thoo comes and tak's my farm fro' me, that's had a Calthorpe in it since afore the flood maybe!—thoo comes pretending to understand sile, and clay, and gravel, and a' about farming, and gi'es thetty pound—thetty pound!—mair rent for a place as I ha' foughten and slaved on, and lost a' my money in, for thoo to tak' out! "Peculiar reasons" eah? What aboot sale-day, now? What aboot sale-day, thoo—But theer! I wean't lose my temper wi' tha. Just go, and let me see tha na mair.'

Still Coverley kept his temper, though with great effort.

'Your daughter's chances of the future,' said he, drumming on the table, 'ought surely to be considered quietly. I'm sure she will be very much disappointed at your'—obstinacy, he was ready to say, but he said—'objection.'

‘She'll get ower't, dean't fear. And “chances”—eah? If she has nae mair chances than o' thoo, she'd better die a maid. Now just go, sir. Dean't need mair axin'.'

‘Well, I'll go,’ said the young man, now quite hot. ‘And the next time I enter this house I will have to be “axed.”’

‘Ay; thou wilt.’

The young man flung out, and the old man began sucking his cold pipe. ‘Him and lass, now,’ said he to himself, ‘I'll be for a colleague together. I wean't allow it! I weant;’ and he rose from his chair to go out and interrupt them. His eye fell on Coverley's forgotten coat, and he stopped. He stepped up to it and turned over one of the lappels, feeling the texture of the cloth.

‘Humph! Oh, ay. Good stuff, and soft, silky lining. Oh, yes; he's a gentleman—he is. He's Coverley, Isquire, o' Hazleby; and wasna I John Calthorpe, Isquire, o' Hazleby, afore him? Dom him!’

He snatched up the coat to carry it out to its owner, when something in a pocket struck heavily against the back of the chair. Calthorpe cast a reflective eye up to the corner of the low ceiling. He glanced towards the door; he turned the coat hurriedly over on his arm; felt for *the* pocket, found it on the inside, and drew from it a little bag which he guessed at once must contain gold: the look of the bag and the soft chink were evidence enough to a man who in his time had had dealings in money. He disposed the coat on the chair-back as it had been before, not pausing to consider with himself why he should arrange it so carefully, and moved a step back with the little bag in his trembling hand. He looked at the door: he did not dare to go and lock it; he hovered between his own seat and the chair on which the coat was with divided glance and thought. Coverley had caused him the loss of more than a hundred pounds—why should he not make up to himself for it? It would be less than justice, for he judged there was less than a hundred pounds in the bag. The bag was almost in his pocket, when there flashed on him the thought, ‘John Calthorpe, you're a thief! You that have never yet stolen so much as a potato or a feed of corn, would steal a bag of gold!’ And in a moment, while his heart beat wildly, he saw himself detected, exposed, disgraced, or condemned; no, no—that must never be. He withdrew the bag from his pocket, and inclined to return it whence he had taken it. Yet, was it not a pity not to take the chance Providence—yes, Providence—had put in his way to be revenged for the much harm George Coverley had done him? And what risk was there of detection and exposure? Still, the

money was not his, and it would be sure to be inquired for. Yes, he would put the money back ; that was the shortest, the only way of allaying these painful scruples. He had taken a resolute step towards the coat when the door opened and in came his daughter. There was now no help for it ; he could but drop the money into his pocket. He turned sucking his pipe as if looking for a light.

‘ Wheer be t’ matches, lass ? Dost see ‘em ? ’ he asked in a voice so strange and tremulous that his daughter looked at him keenly.

‘ Are you unwell, father ? You look it. Sit down, dear.’ He sat down. ‘ Here are the matches, staring at you from the mantel. Shall I scratch one for you ? ’

‘ Ay, lass ; do.’

She stood uncertainly, looking at her father and fingering the edge of the mantel-piece. He uneasily sucked at his pipe and stared on the floor. She thought he was angry with her. She found it very hard to begin what she had to say ; he thought she must know, or at least suspect, what he had done, and he was afraid to raise his eyes, or to say a word ; so that between them there was a very embarrassed pause. She was the first to break silence, for her heart was full ; she had even shed a furtive tear or two before she had come in. George had said, ‘ Never ask me to speak to your father again. If we wait to get over his ridiculous objections, we shall never get married at all.’

‘ I can’t do it without his permission, George,’ said she ; ‘ I would never be happy.’

Psha ! ’ said he—heedless, in his own sense of injury, of the pain he was giving her. ‘ I think you might consider me a little.’

‘ Oh, George, I do. But, if—if you think I don’t, you—you are not bound to me, you know.’

‘ Very well, if that’s it. If you’re so determined to put your father before me, it might be as well we did not marry.’

‘ Yes, George, it might. Someone else might—might do better for you.’ She would not say ‘ love you better,’ for that she knew no one else could do.

‘ Oh, very well, then. Good-bye.’ And he was off, striking his leg with his riding-whip.

So now she stood before her father, and said :

‘ Father, have I ever been anything but as good, as dutiful a daughter to you as I could be ? ’

What was this the prelude to ? he wondered, and raised [his eyes to her face in considerable trepidation.

‘ Yes ; thou’st aye been a good lass, and willing, and—and—’

'I don't want you to praise me, father. But have I not always helped you so far as I could ?'

'Oh, yes ; thoo'st aye borne thy part weel, I mun say that for tha.'

'Then, father, why won't you help me just a little ?'

'Eh ?'

'George Coverley, you know—he has told you—he has asked me to marry him, and I told him I would if you were willing, but I wouldn't without.'

'Thoo stick to that, lass ; stick to that.'

'But why aren't you willing, if I like him and if he— Let me finish what I have to say, father. He is so kind, if you only really knew ; if I married him, it would be better for you than this.'

'If thou were twenty times married to un, I woulndna touch a penny— Ah !'

'Why, father, what's the matter ?'

'Nou't, lass, nou't. Lat be.'

'But now, wouldn't you like—don't be angry if I ask you this—would you not like to go back to Hazleby ?'

'Does he propose that really—eah ?'

'He does, father, really and truly.'

'Ay, but to work for him odd dirty jobs—muck t' byre and that 'n. Nay, I wean't be his odd dirty man.'

'Nothing of the sort, father. You would live with us, and I would look after you. You might do nothing or something, just as you liked ; just saunter about with your Sunday coat on and your thin shoes, and be Calthorpe of Hazleby again.'

'Cod, lass, sayst tha ? Thoo fain mak'st my een water. But, no, no ; it canna be. Weel, weel ; we'll speak about it by-and-by.' And he rose, laid by his pipe, and went out.

She was still standing with her face warm and bright, thinking as if already her father's objections to her wedding with George were removed, when that young man himself passed the window and hurriedly came in. He had come back to 'make it up' with her, and she would tell him the good news of her father's mollification !—and at the thought she turned to meet him with a flush of crimson. He was still rather sulky, and gave her but a half-averted look.

'I've come back for my coat,' said he, striding up to the chair. He took up the coat and felt its folds. What he expected to find did not meet his touch, and, flinging out an alarmed glance, he hurriedly turned the coat over and felt in the pockets. Then he paused, and his eyes roved about in dismayed thought.

Jenny was at first chilled and disappointed by his manner, but she forgot that now and said in real anxiety, ‘What is the matter, George? Have you lost something?’

‘Yes.’

She went nearer him : ‘Of great value?’

‘A bag with sixty pounds in gold.’

‘Oh, my dear, how is that? Where have you lost it?’

‘I could almost swear,’ said he, rather to himself than to her, ‘that I had the money when I came in.’

‘Oh, George!’ There was agony in her voice as she fell away a step and caught at the back of her father’s chair. ‘You don’t surely—’

‘Suspect anybody?’ said he, finishing for her, in a sudden flush of revelation of what his former words might be taken to mean. ‘No; I don’t know whom to suspect. I got the money at the bank to pay my people their month’s wages and to have some in the house; I had the top-coat on then. I went into the grocer’s, and then to the saddler’s, and then to the post-office to ask for letters. I got a newspaper and put it into my pocket—and here it is yet—and I remember feeling the bag in my pocket then. I walked down here, and finding it rather warm I pulled my coat off.’

‘It may have dropped from the pocket when you threw your coat on your arm.’

He shook his head : ‘I should have heard it. I was stupid; I should have taken and put it in this pocket,’ touching his breast.

‘Then you really believe you brought it here,—into this room?’

He looked at her reluctantly, but said not a word.

‘Oh, George, this is dreadful!’ she cried, leaning on the chair in a wild fit of weeping.

‘Jenny, Jenny, my dear! What can I do? What can I say?’

‘Let me be—a moment. Don’t touch me.’

She was not a weak, hysterical girl, notwithstanding that she was thin and of a sensitive temperament. She soon recovered a tolerable composure, though a wild sob would now and then leap into her throat. She now talked very quietly, holding by the back of the chair.

‘You don’t think it was me?—do you?’

‘Jenny, Jenny! What are you saying, my girl?’

‘Then you think it—it was—father?’

Her pitiless logic—pitiless for herself—made him wince. He

could not bring himself to say he believed her father had taken the money, and yet—yet—

‘ You know how he dislikes me,’ he said; ‘ how he encourages all those mad notions of the losses I caused him! He may have only thought it was tit for tat; he may have even done it just by way of—of joke.’

‘ Yes, George, I understand; you would try and make it easy to bear; it is kind of you. But I never knew my father to take anything or to tell a lie. If he has taken this, he will, I think, say he has if we ask him.’

Poor Jenny seemed to forget for the moment her own inexorable process of deduction; for, if her father had transgressed one of his virtues, might not that argue a likelihood of his trampling on the other?

As Jenny had expected, her father speedily returned; it was tea-time. He glanced keenly from the one to the other, and comprehended the situation; his bushy brows and wrinkled eyelids seemed to close upon his eyes, as he walked straight to the mantel-shelf and took down his pipe.

‘ Father,’ said Jenny with a trembling voice, ‘ Mr. Coverley has lost a large sum of money—a bag of gold. Have—have you seen anything of the money?’

Calthorpe felt relieved by the form the question took; he was not an accustomed liar, and he had feared at first he might not be able to say ‘ no’ in a firm enough voice. But he could with truth say ‘ no’ to his daughter’s inquiry; for he had not yet looked into the bag; when out-of-doors he had been engaged fighting his scruples over again, and re-hardening his heart against Coverley.

‘ Seen ou’t o’ golden money? Not I. Theer be a’ the money o’ ony sort I ha’ seen for a fortnight;’ and he produced a shilling and a few coppers, and then quietly turned and filled his pipe.

Jenny looked at George, but more in perplexity than in triumph.

‘ Wheer was t’ money lost?’ Calthorpe asked in the most ordinary voice, turning again. Perhaps his want of curiosity was a little overdone.

‘ I don’t know,’ said George, uttering what was now his genuine, bewildered opinion.

‘ Then thoo wean’t know wheer to find it,’ said Calthorpe, lighting his pipe.

‘ No,’ said George, looking at him. ‘ Good-night.’

‘ I hope you will find it soon,’ said Jenny when they were parting at the door. ‘ You will let me know if you find it. You see, dear, you must have lost it somewhere in the town, after all.’

III.

To some it may seem hardly to be expected that the conscience of such a man as John Calthorpe, who perhaps appears to them a mere rude sordid clown, should be so seriously discomposed by what he had done as we have shown it to be. But it must be remembered that if until now Calthorpe had been as unconscious of possessing a conscience as he was of having a stomach, that had been mainly because of its healthy, natural action. He had never taken anything that was not his own; he had always been unswervingly truthful, even to blunt coarseness, as we have seen; he had always spoken out the word that was in him without fear; it had never occurred to him to do or be otherwise. His conscience had hitherto proceeded with him as simply and contentedly, perhaps as awkwardly, as his body; and now that he had suddenly thrust a stick between the legs of it, and for the first time tripped it up, it looked about it in surprise and fear.

For our purpose the most noteworthy consequence of this was the new regard in which Calthorpe felt compelled to view his daughter. This one being of his own left had such a belief in him that she had not for a moment thought of suspecting him of theft, and he felt deeply grateful, and at the same time ashamed. She was surely an admirable girl, and he rejoiced that he had at least not done her wrong: he had not deceived her: he had not *seen* the money. Yet, how long would she continue to believe in him? And how long could he maintain his truth to her?

That evening, while he sat apparently wrapt in moody contemplation of the thin blue smoke from his pipe, he really gave the liveliest attention to his daughter, and every movement she made, every glance she gave, every word she uttered, woke in him a vague dread. He had never thus waited on his daughter before, never before concerned himself about what she might think or say. And when, sitting in grave serenity over her sewing, she said suddenly, ‘You know, father, Geo—Mr. Coverley was almost sure the money was in his pocket when he came in here. It is just possible—isn’t it?’ letting her hands rest and looking up, ‘that some one might have come in while there was nobody in the room, that carter-man, perhaps; we don’t know much about him;’—when she said that, he was in absolute terror lest she should put him to the question again, and he should be compelled by his distressed conscience to confess.

‘Maybe,’ said he, rising hurriedly. ‘Howswiver, I’ll see him in t’ morning. Good-night, lass.’

'Going to bed, father, already? Don't you feel well?'

'I be a' right, lass. But it be very nigh my bed-time. It be gone eight.'

She rose to say 'good-night,' to give him an unwonted kiss—for Calthorpe had never encouraged the caresses of his family—and to say something. She looked down shyly, and, fingering the big button of his coat (the little action of trust and familiarity touched John strangely), said,—

'You will think over what I told you, father? He is really so kind and good, if you only knew him; I'm sure you would be yourself again, and not be at all—what shall I say?—sore and bitter if you were back at dear old Hazleby.'

'Ay, lass,' he stammered; 'I'll think about it, 'ooney. Good-night.'

Calthorpe went to bed and closed his eyes, but sleep did not come to him. His slow thought, which had for years brooded in narrow selfishness on his losses, which had renewed and multiplied themselves as regularly as the seasons, was now roused and fluttered up. He had not yet looked into the bag, he had not yet *seen* the money (he still clung to that queer style of truth left to him), but the bag was under the bolster with his hand upon it. It was a truly rich sensation, that he who for years had not had a sovereign but what was pledged to some person or other, had now fifty, sixty, perhaps a hundred sovereigns which he might call his own. To possess them was much, yet to look at them was more—was, indeed, a delight which as he dwelt on it he could not deny himself. He rose on his elbow, leaned from his bed, and lit the candle which was at hand. He drew forth the bag, opened it with trembling fingers, and poured out the money on the sheet. Just then a step was passing his door; his daughter was going to her room—he paused in horror: could she have heard the chink of the money? No; she moved steadily on. Yet, if she should question him again in the morning, what could he say? He had now *seen* the money. He pushed it back into the bag without counting it, put the bag again under the bolster, blew out the light, and lay down.

He had stolen, and now he would have to lie if asked again about the money. But that he felt might be pretty easy after what he had now gone through. He had the money, he had seen it and handled it; it was his—his. Yet if it were to end there, how was he recouped for making himself a thief, a liar, probably a criminal on whom every man's hand and look would be turned? He had broken the laws of his country, and his fancy rose with youthful vigour and showed him all the terrible gathering shapes

he had summoned for his ruin. If once a single coin of that money was spent, he felt he would be suspected; and a fearful, rapid vision flashed by him of policemen, lawyers, and crowded court, witnesses, judges, a *sentence*, and then a horribly dark, cold prison for ever and ever; and out of it all, but far from him, appeared his daughter with surprise and pity in her face. He shuddered and opened his eyes upon the still darkness of his room. These were foolish fears. He had not spent any of it; he would not spend any. He would hide and lock it secretly away, and take delight in knowing he had it and *might* spend it if he chose. And then it was likely that when he had kept it awhile, when it was forgotten—by others—he might produce it bit by bit and enjoy it, accounting for it to his daughter in some way which he would think of at his leisure.

He stole out of bed, lit his candle, and, with the bag in his bosom, slipped downstairs to an old-fashioned oak 'secretary' in the parlour. In a deep inner drawer, of which only himself knew, he locked the bag away and returned to bed with an almost light heart; for was it not all the same now as if he had not the money? as if Coverley had dropped it down a hole?—which would never have been troubled with qualms of conscience in swallowing it up.

He returned to bed, but not yet could he sleep. His wakeful thought set off on another round. His daughter—yes, his daughter, whose serene, unhesitating belief in her father that day had made him consider her and see whether the point of view from which he had hitherto regarded her was not wrong; she had gently appealed to him to think of her, and of 'what I told you, father.' What kind of man was he that such an appeal should be necessary? All his intellectual powers were now roused from the selfish, absorbed sleep of years. His memory rose against him, and showed him how he had neglected his child and let her slave for him and his interests: she might have run to waste, for all he had done to care for and train her! But, in spite of all, she was a good, a gracious girl, with such loving, noble ways as must draw the hearts of men. Was not that evident, when a man like Coverley, who must have known many young women—ay, and fine delicate town ladies too—preferred his 'lass' to them all? He allowed to himself now, he might have misjudged Coverley. There flashed upon him a new consideration—and he called himself 'a gawmous, addled idiot,' that it had not occurred to him before—since Coverley all along had been 'sweet' upon his daughter, and no doubt expected to marry her, and by marrying her come into the expectation of whatever her father might have.

was it likely he would have been at the trouble purposely to ‘do’ his probable father-in-law? At any rate, whatever might or might not have been Coverley’s faults, he had, by Jenny’s account, now made very generous proposals. And to think that that was just the time he had taken it into his mad head to behave as he had never behaved in his life before—to do a deed which if it became known would for ever spoil his daughter’s dearest hopes and his own! ‘I’ve just cut off my nose to spite my face, au’d ass that I am!’ If there was only a way of letting Coverley have the money back without exciting suspicion! Yes, yes; he knew what he would do! He would drop it in some place where Jenny would readily find it; and she would take it back to Coverley, and all would be well. And with that he fell asleep.

But, alas! the morning light did not find him in the same mood. It would not do, he thought, to be in haste to drop the bag where Jenny could find it. A suitable opportunity must be waited for. He hung about all the morning, and saw, with uneasiness which grew to dismay, Jenny sweep and dust, first here and then there, while he followed her about with his eye, remarking to himself, ‘That spot wean’t do to drop it in, or she would say, “I swep’ that out, and there was nou’t there.” Nor that spot wean’t do, nor that, nayther.’

‘Father,’ said Jenny, ‘aren’t you going out this morning? You promised to see that carter, you remember.’

‘Ah, yes, lass.’ And he went out.

When he returned he found that Jenny (for it was Saturday) had swept and cleaned out every hole and corner, from the little gate that opened on the road, through passages and kitchen and all, right into the little parlour. So that there was not a spot left to him! Not a likely spot, that is; for it would be too suspicious to put the bag where Coverley himself could not have laid or dropped it. With the increasing difficulties in the way of carrying out his plan, his purpose began to weaken. He questioned himself whether he was not after all a fool for his pains. A bag of gold was always a bag of gold, however it was come by and however long it was kept. It was not butter or beef, to spoil on his hands; and he smiled inwardly at his own wit.

‘Well,’ asked Jenny at dinner-time, ‘have you spoken to the carter yet, father?’

‘Ay, ay; I spoken to ’m. He knows nou’t about the money.’

‘But did you find out where he was at the time?’

‘Ah; he was takin’ a load o’ hay fro’ Stone-end all t’ afternoon.’

‘It’s very strange how such a lot of money was lost.’

' Ay, it be. Hast got a drop mair gravy, lass ? '

Yes ; it must seem a mystery to everyone, thought Calthorpe, how the money was lost, and a mystery it was sure to remain ; for he would never be suspected. Yet, yet—and he argued himself over all the old ground, returning again to the point whence he had started, but where he could not even now stay. There was no rest for him in either resolution or conscience, so he that night also went early to bed. There his case appeared to him more clearly than ever in all its details and difficulties. He not suspected ! Why, if Coverley swore he had brought the money into the house with him (and he might swear it, in spite of his regard for Jenny), he, and he alone, could be suspected ! This possibility came upon him with all its original dread. Then he was appalled to see how opportunities for restitution of the money might narrow and narrow down from day to day till he would be shut in to the alternative of keeping it or throwing it away. Had not that one day taken from him at least two chances ? He could not now leave the bag about anywhere in the house for Jenny to find, nor could he now, after what he had said, at any time divert suspicion on the carter.

With these and similar thoughts his strained attention became gradually wearied, and he slipped from them into uneasy slumber. He dreamed a short, vivid dream :—This deed, which he thought no one knew of, was really known to all ! The windows and doors were crowded with curious eyes and straining necks, and policemen entered the room, where the 'secretary' stood with its lid down, with every drawer open, with even that inner drawer open, exposing to the sight of all the bag of gold he had stolen ! He started awake all trembling with a gasp on his lips. The dream seemed so real that he rose in fear and haste, lit his candle, and slipped downstairs to assure himself that the 'secretary' was as he had left it.

In his preoccupation and haste, he did not see that almost as he issued from his room his daughter issued from hers. She had been lying awake thinking, when she had heard her father utter a strange choking cry of distress, and she had at once risen to go to him. She followed him noiselessly, wondering whether he was walking in his sleep or no. She saw him go to the desk and unlock it, and then unlock a little door and a drawer, which he pulled out ; then she saw he put in his fingers as if pressing on something, and then his whole hand, and drew out—oh, heavens ! a little bag full of something heavy. She guessed at once what it was, and she stood rooted in wonder and pain. He re-locked the 'secretary' and turned away with the bag in his hand, and saw his

daughter standing before him—oh!—with such a look of grief and reproach on her pale face. He was stricken dumb, and could scarcely look away.

‘Let me carry that, father, and come back to bed; you’ll catch cold.’

He obeyed, and was very still and silent when she helped him into bed and tucked him in. Then she bent over him, as if he were her child.

‘Tell me, dear,—will you?’ she said in a tender voice that sounded as if tears were not far off,—‘this bag—is it your own, or is it that one that was—was lost?’

There was a pause; what should he say?

‘Oh, my dear,’ pleaded she, ‘won’t you trust me? You’re not afraid of me?’ and she caressed his withered cheek.

‘Yes,’ he answered at length; ‘it be.’

‘It be which, dear?’

‘That un;—Coverley’s. I wanted to gi’e it back ever since, lass, but I dean’t know how. I was freckened wi’ a dream about it the now. What wilt do, lass?’

‘Give it back to him, father, and tell him—the truth, dear.’

‘Eh, lass, but he’ll ha nou’t to say to tha then! He winna want to marry tha then!

‘That may be so, dear. But I can’t help that; I must tell him.’

‘I ha’ been a wicked au’d feller! And now thou’rt to be punished instid o’ me! I wish I were dead or i’ t’ work’us!’ And a few tears were wrung with pain from his dry old eyes.

But his daughter hung over him like a mother, and stroked and soothed him.

‘I think, dear,’ said she, ‘I know George better than you. He is not hard. I don’t think he will punish me very severely. I think, father, he—he likes me very much; and he was always very sorry for you, dear.’

And thus, by and by, she left him consoled.

Next day was Sunday, when Jenny expected to see George Coverley as usual after the evening service; then she would say what she had to say to him. She waited in unwavering resolution, surrounded by fears and hopes. She saw George in church, and thought it strange she could not catch his eye; but her heart quite misgave her when on leaving church, instead of coming to her as he was wont, he strode off to the stables for his horse. She walked on, feeling chill and forsaken. What had she done? Why did not George come to speak to her? She stepped on in silence by her father’s side; she could not trust herself to speak. In a little came the sound of trotting hoofs behind; her heart was in

her mouth, and she trembled with expectation : would he stop now and speak ? On he came ; she could see without turning her head the well-known chestnut cob throwing out its fore feet and the figure rising and sinking on its back. He was up with them —he was riding by ! Oh, she must not let him go thus !

‘ Stop him, father ! Stop him ! ’ she hurriedly whispered. ‘ He must know to-night.’

Her father ran into the road, crying, ‘ Hi, Coverley ! Hi !’ Coverley drew rein and looked back. Calthorpe went up to him, and with his hand on the bridle said, ‘ I mun speak to tha. On Friday thou said thoo mun be axed afore thou’d enter my house again ; I ax thee.’

‘ Very well,’ said George ; but he did not dismount to walk by Jenny’s side.

When the little cottage was reached he dismounted, fastened the bridle to the gate, and entered.

‘ We ha’ summat to gi’e tha,’ said Calthorpe ; ‘ wean’t tha sit down ?’

‘ Thank you, I mustn’t stay ;’ and he continued standing, beating his leg with his whip. ‘ What do you want to say to me, may I ask ? I have known nothing in this house before but insult and—and loss.’

Jenny brought the bag and put it into his hands without a word. He looked in amazement from the father to the daughter ; then he opened the bag to assure himself that it was his money. Calthorpe hung back a little, biting his thumb.

‘ Dang ’t a !’ at length he exclaimed, coming forward. ‘ I mun speak. It be a’ my fault, Coverley. Do with me as thou like—put me i’ prison if thoo like—but dean’t now put spite on my ‘ooney here.’

‘ I don’t want to do any harm to either of you. The money’s come back to me—I won’t ask more about it. I don’t care for the money.’ He turned as if to go, and then paused, tapping his leg. ‘ Jenny,’ said he, ‘ won’t you think better of it ?’

‘ Of what, George ?’

He looked up at her. ‘ Of—of what you said on Friday. Didn’t you tell me to go and find another sweetheart ?’

‘ Nay, George. I maybe said it would be better for you than to be bothered any more with me. But I didn’t think you would do it.’

‘ Didn’t you, Jenny ?’

‘ No, George ; how could I ?’

The cob had to wait a while longer at the gate, but he carried a happy master home that night.

‘Suit the Action to the Word.’

WHEN Hamlet told the tragedians of the city that they should suit the action to the word, the word to the action, he seemed to be affording them advice that was at once both sound and simple ; yet to effectively combine speech with movement or gesture so that they may ‘go hand in hand, not one before another,’ constitutes one of the greatest difficulties of histrionic art. What kind of action is suited to particular words ? How much or how little action is permissible ? What words are to be accompanied or illustrated by action, and what words may be left to run alone, as it were, and take care of themselves ? These are the questions the performer is required to answer for himself. Hamlet can but proffer counsel of a general sort. The modesty of nature is not to be overstepped ; the actors are not to mouth their speeches, nor to saw the air too much with their hands ; in the very torrent, tempest, and even whirlwind of their passion, they are to acquire and beget a temperance that may give it smoothness. Yet they are not to be too tame ; their own discretion is to be their tutor ; the purpose and end of playing being to hold the mirror up to nature, &c. There is danger alike in overdoing and in coming tardy off ; in either case the unskilful may be made to laugh, but the judicious will be made to grieve, the ‘censure of which one’ is in the allowance of the players to ‘overweigh a whole theatre of others.’

It is probable that the judicious have been more often made to grieve by overdoing and redundancy of action than by tameness and tardiness of histrionic method. In one of his letters Macready has narrated how his own early manner was marred by excess and exaggeration, and how he became sensible of his errors of this kind. His observation of actual life suggested misgivings ; he noted how sparingly and therefore how effectively Mrs. Siddons had recourse to gesticulation ; a line in Dante taught him the value and dignity of repose ; and a theory took form in his mind, presently to obtain practical demonstration of its correctness when he saw Talma act, ‘whose every movement was a change of subject for the sculptor’s or the painter’s study.’ Macready had been taught to imitate in gesture the action he might be relating, or ‘to figure out some idea of the images of his speech.’ A chapter in ‘Peregrine Pickle’ descriptive of Quin’s acting as Zanga in ‘The Revenge’ convinced him of the absurdity of accompanying narra-

tion by elaborate gesticulation ; he applied the criticism to himself in various situations which might have tempted him to like extravagance. Peregrine is supposed to complain of Quin's Zanga as out-Heroding Herod, especially in the scene of the Moor's relating to Isabella how Alonzo's jealousy had been inflamed by the discovery of a letter designedly placed in his path. It seemed to Peregrine that Mr. Quin's action intimately resembled the ridiculous grimacing of a monkey when he delivered Zanga's speech regarding the letter.

He took it up ;
But scarce was it unfolded to his sight
When he, as if an arrow pierced his eye,
Started, and trembling dropped it on the ground.

In pronouncing the first two words the actor was said to stoop down and seem to take up something from the stage ; he then mimicked the manner of unfolding a letter, and arriving at the simile of an arrow piercing the eye he darted his forefinger towards that organ. At the word 'started' he recoiled with great violence, and when he came to 'trembling dropped it on the ground,' he threw all his limbs into a tremulous emotion and shook the imaginary paper from his hand. The same system of minute gesticulation accompanied further portions of the speech. At the words :

Pale and aghast awhile my victim stood,
Disguised a sigh or two and puffed them from him ;
Then rubbed his brow and took it up again,

the player's countenance assumed a wild stare, he sighed thrice most piteously as though he were on the point of suffocation, he scrubbed his forehead, and, bending his body, aped the action of snatching an object from the floor. He continued :

At first he looked as if he meant to read it ;
But, checked by rising fears, he crushed it thus,
And thrust it, like an adder, in his bosom.

Here the performer imitated the confusion and concern of Alonzo, seemed to cast his eyes upon something from which they were immediately withdrawn with horror and precipitation ; then, 'shutting his fist with a violent squeeze, as if he intended to make immediate application to Isabella's nose,' he rammed it into his own bosom with all the horror and agitation of a thief taken in the act. Mr. Pickle in his character of dramatic critic concludes : 'Were the player debarred the use of speech and obliged to act to the eyes only of the audience, this mimicry might be a necessary conveyance of his meaning ; but when he is at liberty to signify

his ideas by language, nothing can be more trivial, forced, unnatural, and antic than his superfluous mummery. Not that I would exclude from the representation the graces of action, without which the choicest sentiments clothed in the most exquisite expression would appear unanimated and insipid ; but these are as different from this ridiculous burlesque as is the demeanour of a Tully in the rostrum from the tricks of a Jack-pudding on a mountebank's stage.'

Convinced that his method was founded upon wrong principles, Macready describes the means he adopted to coerce his limbs to perfect stillness the while he exhibited 'the wildest emotions of passion.' He would lie on the floor or stand straight against a wall or tie bandages about his arms, and while so pinioned or restricted, he would recite the most violent passages of Othello, Lear, Hamlet, Macbeth, or whatever would require most energy and emotion ; he would speak the most passionate bursts of rage 'under the supposed constraint of whispering them in the ear of him or her to whom they were addressed,' thus keeping both voice and gesture in subjection to the real impulse of the feeling. 'I was obliged also,' he writes, 'to have frequent recourse to the looking-glass, and had two or three large ones in my room to reflect to myself each view of the posture I might have fallen into, besides being under the necessity of acting the passion close to a glass to restrain the tendency to exaggerate its expression, which was the most difficult of all, to repress the ready frown, and keep the features, perhaps I should say the muscles of the face, undisturbed, while intense passion should speak from the eye alone. The easier an actor makes his art appear, the greater must have been the pains it cost him.'

Amateurs and young actors almost invariably incline to exaggeration ; they permit themselves excess of movement and gesture ; their discretion is insufficiently cultivated to be their tutor, and they overact strangely ; they pace the stage wildly and incessantly, they rant, their arms and legs are employed with a sort of graceless and vehement diffuseness. As Mr. G. H. Lewes writes : 'All but very great actors are redundant in gesticulation ; not simply overdoing the significant, but unable to repress insignificant movements. . . . If actors will study fine models, they will learn that gestures to be effective must be significant, and to be significant they must be rare. To stand still on the stage and not appear "a guy" is one of the elementary difficulties of the art, and one which is rarely mastered.' Voltaire preparing a young actress to appear in one of his tragedies, tied her hands to her sides with packthread so as to check her tendency towards ex-

uberance of gesticulation. Under this condition of compulsory immobility, she commenced to rehearse, and for some time she bore herself calmly enough ; but at last, completely carried away by her feelings, she burst her bonds and flung up her arms. In some alarm at her seeming neglect of his instructions she began to apologise to the poet ; he smilingly reassured her, however ; the gesticulation was *then* admirable, because it was irrepressible.

Of the elder tragedians variety or abundance of gesture seems not to have been required. The great Mr. Betterton indulged in little movement upon the stage. He had short, fat arms, we are told, ‘which he rarely lifted higher than his stomach.’ His left hand frequently lodged in his breast, between his coat and his waistcoat, while with his right he ‘prepared his speech.’ His actions were few but just. He was incapable of dancing, even in a country-dance ; but an actor possessed of ‘a corpulent body and thick legs with large feet’ could hardly be expected to dance. The comedians were allowed to be more mercurial ; liveliness of manner and movement almost necessarily accompanied drollery of speech. But to the introduction of pantomimes was ascribed the employment of ‘a set of mechanical motions, the caricatures of gestures.’ Theophilus Cibber charged Garrick with a ‘pantomimical manner of acting every word in a sentence ;’ the very accusation Peregrine Pickle brought against Mr. Quin. Cibber credited himself with perception of the actor’s merits when he condescended to pursue simple nature. ‘Yet,’ the critic continued, ‘I am not therefore to be blind to his studied tricks, his over-fondness for extravagant attitudes, frequent affected starts, convulsions, twitchings, jerkings of the body, sprawling of the fingers, slapping the breast and pockets, &c.’ Garrick had been a diligent student of the pantomimical feats, the wonderful mimicry of Rich. ‘That Garrick,’ writes Cibber, ‘before his taste was mature should think the expressive dumb show of Rich might be introduced with effect in stage dialogue, is not surprising.’ Macklin’s acrimonious account of Garrick’s histrionic method ascribes to him excessive movement and gesticulation. ‘His art in acting consisted in incessantly pawing and hawling the characters about with whom he was concerned in the scene ; and where he did not paw or hawl the characters, he stalked between them and the audience ; and that generally when they were speaking the most important and interesting passage in the scene, which demanded, in propriety, a strict attention. When he spoke himself, he pulled about the character he spoke to and squeezed his hat, hung forward, and stood almost upon one foot, with no part of the other to the ground but the toe of it. His whole action when he made love in

tragedy or in comedy, when he was familiar with his friend, when he was in anger, sorrow, rage, consisted in squeezing his hat, thumping his breast, strutting up and down the stage, and pawing the characters that he acted with.' This criticism must be accepted with some allowance for the spirit of detraction which largely animated the author.

It was said of the comedian Woodward that he was Harlequin in every part he played; his great pantomimic experience affected his every impersonation. He was reputed to be, after Rich, 'the best teller of a story in dumb show the English stage had ever seen.' He acquired in this way an extraordinary habit of suiting the action to the word and the word to the action, of illustrating speech with gesture. If he was required to mention an undertaker, he flapped his hat, pursed his brow, clasped his hands, and with a burlesque solemnity strode across the stage before he spoke; he would mimic the wiping of a glass or the drawing of a cork at the word 'waiter,' and could not say 'mercer' till he had measured off several yards of cloth on the flap of his-coat. It is added, however, that he 'did these things with such strength of imitation and of humour that, although it was flagrantly wrong, criticism itself could not forbear to laugh.'

Goldsmith observing that the English used very little gesture in ordinary conversation, found as a consequence that our players were stiff and formal of deportment, that their action sat uneasily upon them, and that they were obliged to supply stage gestures by their imagination alone. A French comedian might discover proper models of action in every company and in every coffee-house he entered. But an Englishman could only take his models from the stage itself; he could only imitate nature from an imitation of nature. 'I know of no set of men more likely to be improved by travelling than those of the theatrical profession,' wrote the Doctor. 'The inhabitants of the continent are less reserved than here; they may be seen through upon a first acquaintance; such are the proper models to draw from; they are at once striking and they are found in great abundance.' It would be inexcusable in a comedian to add everything of his own to the poet's dialogue, yet as to action he was entirely at liberty. In this way it was open to him to show the fertility of his genius, the poignancy of his humour, and the exactness of his judgment. Goldsmith describes a French actor, while exhibiting an ungovernable rage as the hero of the comedy 'l'Avare,' betraying the avariciousness of Harpagon's disposition by stooping suddenly to pick up a pin and quilting it in the flap of his coat-pocket with great assiduity. 'Two candles are lighted up for his wedding; he flies and extinguishes one; it is, however, lighted up again; he then

steals to it and privately crams it into his pocket.' A representation of the 'Mock Doctor' was also commended. 'Here again the comedian had an opportunity of heightening the ridicule by action. The French player sits in a chair with a high back, and then begins to show away by talking nonsense which he would have thought Latin by those who do not understand a syllable of the matter. At last he grows enthusiastic, enjoys the admiration of the company, tosses his legs and arms about, and, in the midst of his raptures and vociferation, he and the chair fall back together.' If this should be thought dull in the recital, it is urged that 'the gravity of Cato could not stand it in the representation,' and that there hardly existed a character in comedy to which a player of real humour could not add strokes of vivacity such as would secure great applause. Instead of this, however, the fine gentlemen of the theatre were wont through a whole part to do nothing but strut and open their snuffboxes; while the pretty fellows sat with their legs crossed, and the clowns pulled up their breeches. These proceedings, the critic concludes, if once or even twice repeated, might do well enough; 'but to see them served up in every scene argues the actor almost as barren as the character he would expose.'

Goldsmith accounted Mademoiselle Clairon the most perfect female figure he had ever seen upon the stage; not that nature had bestowed more personal beauty upon her than upon certain English actresses—there were many, indeed, who possessed as much 'statuary grace,' by which was meant 'elegance unconnected with motion,' as she did; but they all fell infinitely short of her when the soul came 'to give expression to the limb and animate every feature.' Her entrance upon the scene was pronounced to be 'excessively engaging.' She did not come in glancing round and staring at the audience as though she was reckoning the receipts, or intended to see as well as to be seen. Her eyes were first fixed upon the other persons in the play, then gradually turned 'with enchanting diffidence' upon the spectators. Her first words were delivered with scarcely any motion of the arm: 'her hands and her tongue never set out together; the one prepared us for the other.' She sometimes began with a mute eloquent attitude; but she never advanced all at once with hands, eyes, head, and voice.' By a simple beginning she gave herself 'the power of rising in the passion of the scene.' As she proceeded, her every gesture, every look, acquired new violence, till at last transported she filled 'the whole vehemence of the part and all the idea of the poet.' Her hands were not alternately stretched out and then drawn in again 'as with the singing women at Sadler's Wells,' but employed with

graceful variety; every moment they pleased with new and unexpected eloquence. And further, she did not flourish her hands while the upper part of her arm was motionless, nor had she the ridiculous appearance 'as if her elbows were pinned to her hips.'

Goldsmith particularly recommends 'our rising actresses,' of all the cautions to be given them, never to take notice of the audience upon any occasion whatsoever: he could not pardon a lady upon the stage who, when she attracted the admiration of the spectators, turned about to make them a low curtsey for their applause. 'Such a figure no longer continues Belvidere, but at once drops into Mrs. Cibber.' Let the audience applaud ever so loudly, their praises should pass, 'except at the end of the epilogue,' with seeming inattention. But while the critic advised 'skilful attention to gestures,' he deprecated study of it in the looking-glass. This, without some precaution, would render their action formal, stiff, and affected. People seldom improved when they had no other model but themselves to copy from. And he records his remembrance of a notable actor 'who made great use of his flattering monitor, and yet was one of the stiffest figures ever seen.' His apartment was hung round with looking-glasses, that he might see his person twenty times reflected upon entering the room; 'and I will make bold to say he saw twenty very ugly fellows when he did so.'

No doubt the harlequin of the present time, if a less valued and important personage than his exemplar, has preserved certain of the traditions of Rich's harlequin, while various of Rich's postures and gestures which Garrick was said to have imported into stage dialogue may still linger in the theatre. The manners, even the mannerisms, of a popular actor become popular in their turn, and are imitated and adopted by his successors. The admired comedian Robert Wilks had, we are informed, a certain peculiar custom of pulling down his ruffles and rolling his stockings; assuredly a later generation of actors pulled down their ruffles and rolled their stockings precisely after Mr. Wilks's manner, just as there are players of to-day who retain the late Charles Mathews's lively habit of adjusting his side locks, his cravat and his wristbands, of putting on and off his gloves, &c.—resembling him in those respects, if in none other. Leigh Hunt writes of Lewis, the favourite comedian of eighty or ninety years since, that 'he drew on his gloves like a gentleman, and then darted his fingers at the ribs of the character he was talking with in a way that carried with it whatever was suggestive and sparkling and amusing.' The stage has known since Lewis's time very much darting of fingers at the ribs of the characters. The elder Mathews's method of ex-

pressing the irritability of Sir Fretful Plagiary by taking furious pinches of snuff and by frequent buttoning and unbuttoning of his double-breasted coat is not yet lost to the theatre. Concerning Munden's variety and significance of grimace and gesture Leigh Hunt grows eloquent. The actor was said to make something out of nothing by his singular 'intensity of contemplation.' He would play the part of a vagabond loiterer about inn-doors, would look at and for ten minutes together gradually approach from a distance a pot of ale on a table, the while he kept the house in roars of laughter by the intense idea which he dumbly conveyed of its contents and the not less intense manifestation of his cautious but inflexible resolution to drink it. Hunt further applauds Munden's personation of a credulous old antiquary upon whom a battered beaver has been imposed as 'the hat of William Tell,' and records how the comedian reverently put the hat on his head, and then solemnly walked to and fro with such an excessive sense of the glory with which he was crowned and the weight of reflected heroism he sustained, elegantly halting now and then to assume the attitude of one drawing a bow, 'that the spectator could hardly have been astonished had they seen his hair stand on end and carry the hat aloft with it.'

Stage gestures acquire, no doubt, a rather stereotyped character, and those who profess to teach acting are apt to inculcate very conventional forms of histrionic expression. The action that is to accompany the word is subject to many rules and limitations. Charles Dickens, who wrote disrespectfully of the Théâtre Français as an establishment devoted to a dreary classicality—'a kind of tomb where you went as the Eastern people did in the stories to think of your unsuccessful loves and dead relations'—especially condemned the gestures employed even by its leading performers. 'Between ourselves, even one's best friends there'—he was thinking of Regnier, perhaps—'are at times very aggravating. One tires of seeing a man, through any number of acts, remembering everything by patting his forehead with the flat of his hand, jerking out sentences by shaking himself and piling them up in pyramids over his head with his right forefinger. And they have a general small-comedy piece,' he continues, 'where you see two sofas and three little tables, to which a man enters with his hat on, to talk to another man—and in respect of which you know exactly when he will get up from one sofa to sit on the other, and take his hat off one table to put his hat upon the other—which strikes one quite as ludicrously as a good farce.'

It is clear that a certain forfeiture of dignity must result from too literal a system of illustrative gesture. Cibber's personation

of Wolsey was much applauded, yet he was strongly censured for the vulgarity of the action with which he embellished the words :

This candle burns not clear ; 'tis I must snuff it.
Then out it goes.

It seems that with his thumb and forefinger, or with his first and second fingers, he imitated the manner of extinguishing a candle by means of a pair of snuffers. Genest writes : ‘One must lament that Shakespeare should have used a metaphor so unworthy of him, but surely the actor should rather endeavour to sink the thing than to bring it peculiarly into notice ;’ and he proceeds to record that when Young played Wolsey he folded his arms the while he delivered the passage and slurred the metaphor completely, evincing in this respect better judgment than Kemble, who, although he did not, like Cibber, pretend to ply the snuffers, yet elevated and wrinkled his grand nose and assumed a disgusted expression, as though the departed candle had left behind it an unpleasant odour. Much discussion arose concerning Kemble’s action as Hamlet when, denouncing the slanders he was reading, he tore the page from the book to demonstrate his bad opinion of the satirical rogue, the author ; and Macready’s waving aloft of a cambric handkerchief by way of expressing Hamlet’s intention to be ‘idle’ may almost be viewed as ‘the direful spring of woes unnumbered.’ Edwin Forrest derided the proceeding, described it as a *pas de mouchoir*, even hissed it : and a feeling of enmity was engendered between the two tragedians which so spread and strengthened as to acquire almost the importance of a national conflict, and terminated in the great New York riot of 1849.

‘Look you whether he has not turned his colour and has tears in his eyes,’ remarks Polonius of the First Player and his recitation ; and Hamlet also comments upon the wanred visage of the actor, the tears in his eyes, his distracted aspect, broken voice, &c. Tears do not rarely visit the eyes of the players, who are moved to sympathy by their own simulations and are able to force their souls so to their own conceits. It is not so much that they are convinced by the familiar Horatian counsel, *Si vis me flere, &c.* ; a proneness to tears is rather a constitutional faculty or failing which players share with playgoers, novel-readers, auditors of poetry, sermons, speeches, &c. But can the actor discharge the colour from his countenance otherwise than prosaically by rubbing the rouge off ? There is extant a description of Betterton’s performance of Hamlet which describes the actor, although naturally of a ruddy and sanguine complexion, as turning pale as his own neckcloth instantly upon the appearance of the ghost. ‘His

whole body seemed to be affected with a tremor inexpressible, so that had his father's ghost actually risen before him he could not have been seized with more real agonies. And this was felt so strongly by the audience that the blood seemed to curdle in their veins likewise,' &c. An American critic has left a curious account of the 'unique and inimitable method' of the late Junius Brutus Booth, and his extraordinary 'control over the vital and involuntary functions.' We are informed that the actor could 'tremble from head to foot, or tremble in one outstretched arm to the finger-tips while holding it in the firm grasp of the other hand. . . . The veins of his corded and magnificent neck would swell, and the whole throat and face become suffused with crimson in a moment, in the crisis of passion, to be succeeded on the ebb of feeling by an ashy paleness. To throw the blood into the face is a comparatively easy feat for a sanguine man by simply holding the breath; but for a man of pale complexion to speak passionate and thrilling words pending the suffusion is quite another thing. On the other hand, it must be observed that no amount of merely physical exertion or exercise of voice could bring colour into that pale proud intellectual face. . . . In a word, he commanded his own pulses, as well as the pulses of his auditors, with most despotic ease.'

From his early practice in pantomime Edmund Kean derived, no doubt, much of the ease and grace of attitude and gesture he displayed as a tragedian. Hazlitt specially commends the actor's impressive and Titanesque postures, yet objects to the gesture he employed as Iago in the last scene of Othello, when he malignantly pointed to the corpses of the Moor's victims. 'It is not in the character of the part, which consists in the love of mischief, not as an end, but as a means. . . . Besides, it is not in the text of Shakespeare.' When Kean as Richard, in his familiar colloquy with Buckingham, crossed his hands behind his back, certain critics held the action to be 'too natural'; while his pugilistic gestures in the concluding scene, though censured by some, were much applauded by others. Hazlitt wrote of him: 'He fought like one drunk with wounds, and the attitude in which he stands with his hands stretched out, after his sword is taken from him, had a preternatural and terrific grandeur, as if his will could not be disarmed, and the very phantoms of his despair had a withering power.' Dr. Doran has noted certain of the actor's 'grand moments,' when, at the close of his career, he appeared a pitiable sight: 'Genius was not traceable in that bloated face; intellect was all but quenched in those once matchless eyes; . . . he moved only with difficulty, using his sword as a stick.' Yet there arose a murmur

of approbation at the pause and action of his extended arm when he said—as though consigning all the lowering clouds to the sea—‘in the deep bosom of the ocean, *buried!*’ The words, ‘The dogs bark at me as I halt by them,’ were so suited with action as to elicit a round of applause.

Mr. Gould’s essays upon the Histrionic Genius of Junius Brutus Booth make frequent mention of the ‘manual eloquence,’ the appropriate ‘hand-play’ of the tragedian, and his inventiveness in that respect. When as Shylock, replying to Salarino’s question touching Antonio’s flesh, ‘What’s that good for?’ he said, ‘To bait fish withal,’ he was wont, in his tamer moods, to employ ‘a gesture as if holding a fishing-rod.’ When as Cassius he said of Cæsar, ‘His coward lips did from their colour fly,’ Booth illustrated the text by a momentary action, as though he were carrying a standard. ‘The movement was fine as giving edge to the sarcasm,’ but, the essayist admits, ‘pointed to a redundancy of action which sometimes appeared in this great actor’s personations, marking the excess in him, however, of those high histrionic powers: keen feeling and shaping imagination.’ Further, Booth’s Cassius was ‘signalised by one action of characteristic excellence and originality.’ After the murder of Cæsar, Booth ‘strode right across the dead body and out of the scene in silent and disdainful triumph.’ As Iago, when saying,

Such a handkerchief
(I am sure it was your wife’s) did I to-day
See Cassio wipe his beard with,

Booth, while pretending to lay his hand on his heart ‘to enforce asseveration,’ tucked away more securely in his doublet the very handkerchief which ‘with fiendish purpose he intended Cassio should wipe his beard with.’ When he exclaimed, ‘The Moor; I know his trumpet’ he seemed to imitate the very sound of the instrument; ‘tossed it from his lips with the careless grace of an accomplished musician. When as Othello he declared, ‘I know not where is that *Promethean* heat,’ it was as though the adjective had but just occurred to him, and the passage was ‘accompanied by a wandering and questioning gesture.’ At the words, ‘It is the very error of the moon; she comes more near the earth than she was wont,’ &c., his gesture ‘seemed to figure the faith of the Chaldean and to bring the moon more near.’ He slew himself by means of a dagger he had worn concealed in his turban.

The value of action as the ally of words will be very freely admitted by those who remember Mr. Irving as Philip, in the Laureate’s tragedy of ‘Queen Mary,’ toying with his poniard, and

with peculiar significance turning its point towards his interlocutor, the Count de Feria, at the words—

And if you be not secret in this matter—
You understand me there, too?

Feria answers: ‘Sir, I do.’ For the action was as intelligible as though the words had been spoken and sentence of death had been passed upon the Count for his failure to be secret in the matter.

DUTTON COOK.

The Mind's Mirror.

IN very varied fashions has philosophy endeavoured at various stages of its career to solve the problem of the face as the mind's mirror, and to gain some clue thereby to the ways and workings of the brain. Often when philosophy was at its worst and vainest, has the problem appeared most certain of solution. From classic ages, onwards to the days of Lavater, Gall and Spurzheim, the wise and occult have regarded their systems of mind-localisation as adapted to answer perfectly all the conditions whereby an enquiring race could test their deductions. But as time passed and knowledge advanced, system after system of mind-philosophy has gone by the board, and has been consigned to the limbo of the extinct and non-existent. Now and then the shreds and patches of former years are sought out by the curious to illustrate by comparison the higher and better knowledge of to-day; and occasionally one may trace in the by-paths of latter-day philosophies, details which figured prominently as the sum and substance of forgotten systems and theories of matter and of mind. So that the student of the rise and decline of philosophies learns to recognise the transient in science as that which is rapidly lost and embodied in succeeding knowledge, and the permanent as that which through all succeeding time remains stamped by its own and original individuality. Especially do such remarks apply to the arts which have been employed to find 'the mind's construction' in face or head. If Lavater's name and his long list of 'temperaments' are things of the far-back past in science, no less dim are the outlines of the extinct science of brain-pans, over which Gall and Spurzheim laboured so long and lovingly, but for the name of which the modern student looks in vain in the index of physiological works dealing with the subjects 'phrenology' once called its own. Pursued together in out-of-the-way holes and corners, the systems of Lavater and Gall are represented amongst us to-day chiefly by devotees whose acquaintance with the anatomy and physiology of the brain is not that of the scientific lecture-room, but that of the philosophers who deal in busts, and to whom a cranium represents an object only to be measured and mapped out into square inches of this quality and half-inches of that. Neglected because of their resting on no scientific basis, the doctrines of phrenology and physiognomy have died as peacefully as the 'lunar hoax' or the opposition to the theory of gravitation. And the

occasionally prominent revival of their tenets in some quarters, but represents the feeble scintillations which attend the decay and announce the transient survivals of movements whose days are numbered as parts of philosophical systems.

Whatever reasonable deductions and solid advances regarding the functions of brain and mind either 'science' tended to evolve, have been long ago incorporated with the swelling tide of knowledge. Phrenology has vanished in the general advance of research regarding the functions of the brain; a region which, apparently without a cloud in the eyes of the confident phrenologist, is even yet unpenetrated in many of its parts by the light of recent experiment and past discoveries. Similarly the science of physiognomy has its modern outcome in the cant phrases and common knowledge with which we mark the face as the index to the emotions, and through which we learn to read the broader phases of the mind's construction. But the knowledge of the face—

as a book

Where men may read strange matters,

has been more fortunate than the science of brain-pans, in respect of its recent revival under new aspects and great authority. From Eusthenes who 'judged men by their features' to Lavater himself, the face was viewed as the mask which hid the mind, but which, as a general rule, corresponded also to the varying moods of that mind, and related itself, as Lavater held, to the general conformation and temperament of the whole body. So that the acute observer might be supposed to detect the general character of the individual by the conformation of the facial lineaments—crediting a balance of goodness here or a soul of evil there, or sometimes placing his verdict in Colley Cibber's words, 'That same face of yours looks like the title-page to a whole volume of roguery.' It argues powerfully in favour of the greater reasonableness of the science of faces, over its neighbour-science of crania, that we find even the vestiges of its substance enduring amongst us still. Of late years the face and its changes have become anew the subject of scientific study, although in a different aspect from that under which Lavater and his compeers regarded it. Now, the physiognomy is viewed, not so much in the light of what it is, as of how it came to assume its present features. Facial movements and 'gestic lore' are studied to-day in the light of what they once were, and of their development and progress. Admitting, with Churchill, the broad fact that the face—

by nature's made

An index to the soul,

modern science attempts to show how that index came to be compiled. In a word, we endeavour, through our modern study of physiognomy, to account for how the face came to be the veritable 'Dyall of the Affections' which the science of yesterday and that of to-day agree in stamping it.

Regarding the face as the chief centre wherein the emotions and feelings which constitute so much of the individual character are localised, common observation shows us, however, that the mind's index is not limited to the play of features alone. A shrug of the shoulders may speak as eloquently of disdain as the stereotyped curl of the upper lip and nose. The 'attitude' of fear is as expressive as the scared look. The outstretched and extended palms of horror are not less typical than the widely opened eyes and the unclosed lips. Gesture language—the speech of the bodily muscles—is in truth almost as much a part of our habitual method of expression as the muscular play of the face ; and the emotions displayed by the countenance gain immeasurably in intensity when aided by the appropriate gestures which we have come tacitly to recognise as part and parcel of our waking lives. No better portrait of the part which muscular movements play in the enforcement of language and feelings has been drawn than that of Shakespeare's Wolsey. Here the picture teems with acts of gesture, each eloquent in its way, and testifying to the conflicting passions and emotions which surged through the busy brain of Henry's counsellor :—

Some strange commotion
 Is in his brain ; he bites his lip and starts ;
 Stops on a sudden, looks upon the ground,
 Then lays his finger on his temple ; straight,
 Springs out into fast gait ; then stops again,
 Strikes his breast hard ; and anon, he casts
 His eye against the moon : in most strange postures
 We have seen him set himself.

We thus obtain, from the full consideration of the means which exist for the expression of the emotions, the knowledge that not the face alone, but the common movements of body and limbs, have to be taken into account in the new science of emotional expression which has thus arisen amongst us. Properly speaking, the modern physiognomy is one of the body as a whole, and not of face alone ; and above all, it is well to bear in mind that the newer aspect of the science deals not merely and casually with this gesture or that, but with the deeper problem of how the gesture came to acquire its meaning and how the 'strange postures' of face and form were evolved.

By way of fit preface to such a subject as the expression of the emotions in a scientific sense, we may, firstly, glance at the emotions themselves and at their general relations to the bodily and mental mechanism of which they form the outward sign and symbol. It is well that, primarily, we should entertain some clear idea as to the exact place which the emotions occupy in the list of mental phases and states. Leaving metaphysical definitions as but little fitted to elucidate and aid a popular study, we may feasibly enough define an 'emotion' as consisting of the particular changes which peculiar states of mind produce upon the mind and body. Such a definition, simple though it appear to be, really extends as far as any mere definition can in the endeavour to present a broad idea of what 'emotions' imply and mean. By some authors, the 'emotion' is interpreted as the mental state which gives rise to the bodily disturbance. But such a mode of treating the term is simply equivalent to an attempt to define the shadow and ignore the substance. Says Dr. Tuke, whose authority in all matters relative to the relation betwixt mind and body we must gratefully acknowledge, 'Everyone is conscious of a difference between a purely intellectual operation of the mind and that state of feeling or sentiment which, also internal and mental, is equally removed from (though generally involving) a bodily sensation, whether of pleasure or pain; and which, from its occasioning suffering, is often termed Passion; which likewise, because it moves our very depths, now with delight, now with anguish, is expressively called Emotion—a true commotion of the mind, and not of the mind only, but of the body.' And in a footnote, Dr. Tuke is careful to remind us that 'it is very certain, however, that our notion of what constitutes an emotion is largely derived from its physical accompaniments, both subjective and objective.' That is to say, the nature of the mental act—which is by some authors exclusively named the emotion—may be, and generally is, imperfectly understood by us; and the name is given rather to the obvious effects of the mind's action on the face and body, than to the mental action which is the cause of these visible effects. Such a result is but to be looked for so long as the mental acts are contained and performed within a veritable arcanum of modern science. The emotion renders us conscious 'subjectively,' or within ourselves, of the mental states which cause the outward postures of body or phases of face. 'The modern student,' says Mr. Fiske, in a recent volume,¹ 'has learned that consciousness has a background as well as a foreground, that a number of mental processes go on within us of which we cannot always render a full and satisfactory account.'

And whilst the source of the common emotions of everyday life is no doubt to be found in the ordinary sensations which originate from our contact with the outer world, there are other emotions which arise from the 'background of consciousness,' and which are manifested in us as actively and typically as are the common feelings of the hour which we can plainly enough account for.

To descend from theory to example in this case is an easy task. The blush which has been called into the cheek by a remark made in our hearing, is as fair and simple an illustration of the objective source of emotions as could well be found. The production of the emotion in such a case depends upon the ordinary laws of sensation, through the operation of which we gain our knowledge of the world—nay, of ourselves also. Waves of sound set in vibration by the voice of the speaker, have impinged upon the drum of the ear. Thence converted into a nervous impression or impulse, these sound-waves have travelled along the auditory nerve to the brain. There received as a 'sensation'—there appreciated and transformed into 'consciousness'—the brain has shown its appreciation of the knowledge conveyed to it by the ear, in the production through the nerve-mechanism of the bloodvessels, of the suffused tint which soon overspreads the face. But this direct production of an emotion by mental action, and from the foreground of consciousness, is opposed in a manner by a second method which may be termed 'subjective' by way of distinction from the objective sensation derived from the voice of the speaker, and giving rise to the blush. From the 'background of consciousness,' wherein Memory may be said to dwell, there may come the remembrance of the occasion which gives rise directly to the blush. Projected into the foreground of consciousness, the subjective sensation may be as vividly present with us in the spirit as when it was felt in the flesh. True to its wonted action, the brain may automatically influence the heart's action, and suffuse the countenance as thoroughly as if the original remark had that moment been made. Ringing in the ears of memory, the subjective sensation may be as powerful as when it was first received from the objective side of life. As has well been remarked, the import and effects of subjective sensations may not be lightly estimated in the production of various phases of the mental life. 'When an exceedingly painful event produces great sorrow, or a critical event great agitation, or an uncertain event great apprehension and anxiety, the mind is undergoing a passion or suffering; there is not an equilibrium between the internal state and the external circumstances; and until the mind is able to reach adequately, either in consequence of a fortunate lessening of the outward pressure, or by a recruiting of its

own internal forces, the passion must continue ; in other words, the wear and tear of nervous element must go on. Painful emotion is in truth *psychical pain*: and pain here, as elsewhere, is the outcry of suffering organic element—a prayer for deliverance and rest. And again, this author—Dr. Maudsley—speaking of the *rationale* of emotion, which in its graver exhibition may produce derangement of mind, says: ‘When any great passion causes all the physical and moral troubles which it will cause, what I conceive to happen is, that a physical impression made upon the sense of sight or of hearing is propagated along a physical path (namely, a nerve) to the brain, and arouses a physical commotion in its molecules; that from this centre of commotion the liberated energy is propagated by physical paths to other parts of the brain, and that it is finally discharged outwardly through proper physical paths, either in movements or in modifications of secretion or nutrition (*e.g.* the influencing of heart and bloodvessels as in blushing). The passion that is felt is the subjective side of the cerebral commotion—its *motion* out from the physical basis, as it were (*e-motion*), into consciousness—and it is only felt as it is felt by virtue of the constitution of the cerebral centres, into which have been wrought the social sympathies of successive ages of men; inheriting the accumulated results of the experiences of countless generations, the centres manifest the kind of function which is embodied in their structure. The molecular commotion of the structure is the liberation of the function; if forefathers have habitually felt, and thought, and done unwisely, the structure will be unstable and its function irregular.’ So much for the nature of emotion, for the connection of the emotions with sensation, and for the part which the feelings may play in inducing aberration of mind. In the concluding words of the paragraph just quoted lies the explanation of the production of mind-derangements through a hereditary bias, namely, the perpetuated effects of ill-regulated mental acts. In the same idea, that of continued and transmitted habit, exists the key to the understanding of the origin of emotions. Above all other causes, habit has acted with extreme power and effect in inducing the association not merely of groups of actions expressive of emotions, but also in forming and stereotyping trains of thought and ideas in harmony therewith. On some such plain consideration, the real understanding of many problems of mind may be said to rest; and certainly in the subject before us it is one we cannot afford to lose sight of throughout the brief study in which we are engaged.

Any such study, however limited its range, must devote a few details to the question concerning the seat of the emotions in the

chief centre of the nervous system. Of old, the peculiar system of nerves lying along the front of the spine, and called the 'sympathetic system,' was believed to possess the function of bringing one part of the body into relation with another part. To this system in modern physiology is assigned the chief command of those processes which constitute the 'organic life' of higher animals, and which, including such functions as digestion, circulation, etc., proceed under normal circumstances independently of the direct operation of will and mind. Liable to be influenced and modified in many ways by the will and by the nervous acts which compose the waking existence of man, the sympathetic nerves may nevertheless be regarded as the chief and unconscious regulators of those processes on the due performance of which the continuity and safety of life depends. But in the physiology of past days these nerves were credited with the possession of a much more intimate relation to the play of emotions. By some authorities in a past decade of science, the seat of the emotions was referred exclusively to the nerves in question and to the processes which they regulate. Under the influence of these nerves and of the emotions, argued these theorists, we see the functions of the body gravely affected; and in some 'epigastric centre,' as the chief nerve-mass of this system was termed, the emotions were declared to reside. But in such a theory of the emotions, results were simply mistaken for causes. On the ground that disturbance of the heart's action, or of digestion, occurred as a sign and symptom of emotion, the play of feelings was assigned to the bodily organs, whither in classic ages had been set the 'passions' and 'humours' residing in spleen, liver, and elsewhere. But in modern science *nous avons changé tout cela*. If we are not thoroughly agreed as to the exact location of the emotions in the brain itself, we at least by common consent regard the central organ of the nervous system as the seat of the feelings which play in divers ways upon the bodily mechanism. Most readers are conversant with the fact that all brains, from those of fishes to those of quadrupeds and man, are built up on one and the same broad type; exhibiting here and there, as we ascend in the scale, greater developments of parts which in lower life were either but feebly developed or otherwise unrepresented at all. To this plain fact, we may add two others which lead towards the understanding of the seat and *locale* of the emotions. In man and his nearest allies, two of the five or six parts of which a typical brain may be said to consist have become immensely developed as compared with the other regions. And it is on this latter account that we familiarly speak of man's brain as consisting of two chief portions

—the big brain, or *cerebrum*, filling well-nigh the whole brain-case; and the little brain, or *cerebellum*, which lies towards the hinder part of the head. To these chief parts of the brain we may add—by way of comprehending the emotional localities—the ‘sensory ganglia,’ or, as they are collectively termed, the ‘sensorium.’ In these latter nerve-masses or ganglia the nerves of special sense—those of sight, hearing, smell, etc.—terminate. Impressions of sight, for instance, received by the eyes, are transferred to the appropriate ganglia in which the act of mind we term ‘seeing’ is excited. And so also with hearing and the other senses; the organ of sense being merely the ‘gateway of knowledge,’ and the true consciousness in which knowledge resides being thus excited within the brain. Add to these primary details one fact more, namely, that the spinal cord, protected within the safe encasement formed by the backbone, possesses at its upper or brain end a large nervous mass known as the ‘medulla oblongata,’ and our anatomical details respecting the nerve-centres may be safely concluded. From the ‘medulla oblongata’ the nerves which in large measure regulate or affect breathing, swallowing, and the heart’s action, spring; so that whatever be the importance of the ‘medulla oblongata’ as an independent centre of mind or brain, there can be no question of its high office as a controller of processes on which the very continuance of life itself depends.

In what part of the nerve-centres are the emotions situated—in big brain, little brain, sensorium, or medulla?—is a query which may now be relevantly asked. The ingenuous reader, imbued with a blind faith in the unity of scientific opinion on matters of importance, will be surprised to find that in the archives of physiology very varied replies may be afforded to this question. Opinions backed by the weight of great authority will tell us that ‘big brain’ is the seat of the emotions, intelligence, the will, and of all those higher nerve functions which contribute to form the characteristic mental existence of man. Such a view, say its upholders, is supported more generally and fully by the facts of physiology and zoology, and by those of sanity and insanity, than any other theory of the exact situation of the ‘mental light.’ Authority of equally eminent character, however, is opposed to the foregoing view regarding the superiority of the big brain over all other parts of the nervous centres; and in this latter instance our attention is directed to the claims of the ‘sensorium’ as already defined, and as distinguished from the big brain itself, to represent the seat of the emotions. The emotions of the lower animals, we are reminded, bear a

relation to the development of these sensory ganglia, rather than to that of the big brain. Dr. Carpenter, for instance, insists that ‘it is the *sensorium*, not the cerebrum, with which the will is in most direct relation.’ Big brain, in the opinion of Carpenter, ‘is not essential to consciousness;’ it is insensible itself to stimuli—that is to say, the brain itself has no sensation or feeling—and it further ‘is not the part of the brain which ministers to what may be called the “outer life” of the animal, but is the instrument exclusively of its “inner life.”’ Impressions of sight are received by the sensory ganglia or masses in relation with the eye; and, adds Carpenter, it would seem probable that *consciousness* of sight only happens when the impression sent from the sensory ganglia to the big brain has returned to these ganglia, and has reacted upon these latter as the centres of sight. Thus, according to Dr. Carpenter’s theory, we may hold the sensorium to be the true seat of the emotions. Inasmuch as we only become conscious of a sight-impression when it has been transmitted back to the sensory ganglia from the big brain, in like manner we become cognisant of an emotion only when the impression has been returned to the sensorium after being modified in the big brain. The latter supplies the modifying effects, but it is left for the sensory masses of the brain to excite consciousness and to further distribute the emotions through the body. By way of fortifying his position, Dr. Carpenter gives the following case quoted from Dr. Abercrombie’s ‘Intellectual Powers’:—‘In the church of St. Peter at Cologne, the altarpiece is a large and valuable picture by Rubens, representing the martyrdom of the Apostle. This picture having been carried away by the French in 1805, to the great regret of the inhabitants, a painter of that city undertook to make a copy of it from recollection; and succeeded in doing so in such a manner, that the most delicate tints of the original are preserved with the most minute accuracy. The original painting has now been restored, but the copy is preserved along with it; and even when they are rigidly compared, it is scarcely possible to distinguish the one from the other.’ Dr. Abercrombie also relates that Niebuhr, the celebrated Danish traveller, when old, blind, and infirm, used to describe to his friends, with marvellous exactitude, the scenes amidst which he had passed his early days, remarking ‘that as he lay in bed, all visible objects shut out, the pictures of what he had seen in the past continually floated before his mind’s eye, so that it was no wonder he could speak of them as if he had seen them yesterday.’ Thus, urges Dr. Carpenter, these instances, equally with Hamlet’s declaration that he beholds his father in his ‘mind’s eye,’ are only to be explained as ideational

or internal representations of objects once seen. The 'background of consciousness' has projected them forwards, in other words, into the waking life in the form of subjective sensations.

The same 'sensorial state' must have been produced in the case of the painter and in that of Niebuhr as was produced by the original objects each had gazed upon—'that state of the sensorium,' says Carpenter, 'which was originally excited by impressions conveyed to it by the nerves of the *external* senses, being reproduced by impressions brought down to it from the cerebrum (or big brain) by the nerves of the *internal* senses.' Lastly, it may be added that by a third section of the physiological world the *medulla oblongata*, or in other words the upper segment of the spinal cord, is to be regarded as the seat of the feelings. The late Professor Laycock inclined strongly towards this latter opinion. He held that the changes connected with the receipt and transmission of impressions from the outside world finally ended in the medulla, and there resulted in the development of the higher feelings and sentiments; whilst ordinary and automatically adapted movements might take place entirely unaccompanied by sensation or consciousness. The medulla in this view is the seat 'of all those corporeal actions—cries and facial movements—by which states of consciousness are manifested,' and these movements 'can be and are manifested automatically.' Mr. Herbert Spencer's views refer 'all feelings to this same centre, admitting also the co-operation of the other parts of the brain. By itself, the medulla cannot generate emotion,' but, adds Mr. Spencer, 'it is that out of which emotion is evolved by the co-ordinating actions of the great centres above it.' How, by way of conclusion, can we account for the diversity of views thus expressed, and to which side should we lean in our views regarding the seat of the emotions? Probably, as a tentative measure, we may rest most safely by assuming that the production of emotion is a compound act in which not merely the big brain but the sensorium is likewise concerned, as implied by Dr. Carpenter; and further, that through the medulla the effects of the emotions—or the emotions as we behold them in the body—are ultimately evolved. 'Much may be said on both sides' of the argument, to use Sir Roger de Coverley's phrase. The difficulty has nowhere been more fairly summarised than in Dr. Tuke's declaration that 'there are objections to the attempt to dissever and separately localise the intellectual and the emotional elements, mental states in which they are combined; and yet I cannot but think that such a special relationship between the emotional element and the medulla must be admitted, as shall explain why the passions act upon the muscles and upon the

organic functions in a way universally felt to be different from that in which a purely intellectual process acts upon them. On the hypothesis which refers the emotional and intellectual elements equally to the hemispheres (big brain), or which does not at least recognise that the power of expressing emotions is dependent upon the medulla oblongata, it seems to me more difficult to account physiologically for the popular belief of the feelings being located in the heart or breast, and for the sensations at the pit of the stomach; while the recognition, in some form or other, of an anatomical or physiological connection between the medulla oblongata and the emotions, brings the latter into close relation with the ganglionic cells of the pneumogastric (a nerve in part controlling the movements of the heart, of breathing, and of swallowing) and with the alleged origin of the sympathetic.'

Thus far we have been engaged in the study of the physiology of the emotions, and in the endeavour to comprehend the nature of the feelings from the nervous side. Our next duty lies in the direction of endeavouring to understand the development of the outward signs of the emotions as displayed not merely in the mind's mirror—the face itself—but in the body at large also. As the emotions are expressed through muscular movements of various kinds—blushing itself being no exception to this rule—our first inquiries may be directed towards ascertaining the exact nature of the relationship between mind and muscle. The ultimate question which awaits solution will resolve itself into the query, 'How has this relationship been developed and perfected?' The emotion, as we have seen, may be said to include in its production the outward and visible expression of an idea, and in this light emotional movements not merely express each its particular thought, but correspond to the well-defined mental state which gave origin to the thought. Emotional movements in others are thus capable of exciting similar and corresponding thoughts in ourselves. Nay, even words and language fall into their definite place in the expression of the emotions, simply when viewed as corresponding to ideas. 'Speak the word,' says Dr. Maudsley, 'and the idea of which it is the expression is aroused, though it was not in the mind previously; or put other muscles than those of speech into an attitude which is the normal expression of a certain mental state, and the latter is excited.'

Turning to the emotions, we see the marked correspondence between ideas and muscular expressions. Language expresses our meaning through 'audible muscular expression;' and through 'visible muscular expression' the passions hold their outward sway. Bacon's idea of the importance of the study of the expression of

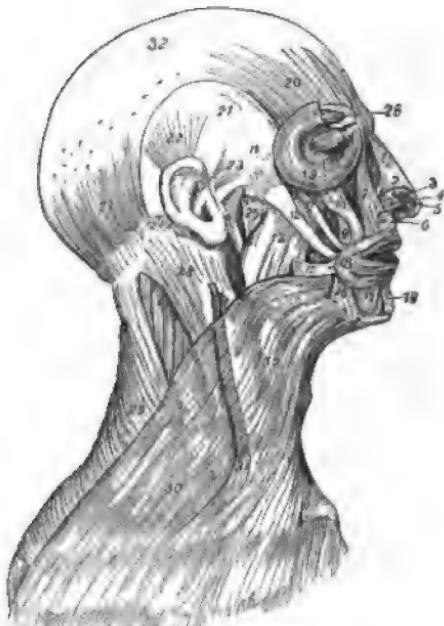
the emotions is well known—‘the lineaments of the body do disclose the disposition and inclination of the mind in general: but the motion of the countenance and parts do not only so, but do further disclose the present humour and state of the mind or will.’ It is no mystery, but the plainest of inferences, that the play of prominent and oft-repeated emotions may thus come to determine a special configuration of face, which may reappear in after generations in the ‘types’ to which Lavater and his contemporaries directed so much attention.

For evil passions, cherish'd long,
Had plough'd them with impressions strong,

says Sir Walter Scott, in describing the features of Bertram; and the poet in such a case but repeats in æsthetic phrase the plain inferences and facts of the science of life.

The muscular acts involved in the production of the most common emotions are not difficult to comprehend, and merely involve an easy anatomical study. My friend Professor Cleland of Glasgow has in a recent paper given an excellent example of this mechanism, and has incidentally shown how attitudes and gestures of body express correlated workings of mind. In the expression of movements of receiving and rejecting—of welcome and repulse—the chief muscles are concerned. The *pectoralis major*, or chief muscle of each side of the breast, is chiefly concerned in the act of embrace and welcome; a second (the *latissimus dorsi*) being employed in the act of rejection—this latter muscle might in fact, as Dr. Cleland remarks, ‘be called the muscle of rejection,’ a name which would express its action more accurately as well as more becomingly than that given to it by old anatomists. The two conditions of muscle—contraction and relaxation—under varying circumstances and combinations in different groups of muscles, may be held to be capable of expressing the entire play of human feelings. The explanation of the mechanism of expression consists merely in a knowledge—not as yet possessed by us in perfect fashion—of the various relations which may persist at one and the same moment between separate muscles in a given region, or between groups of these muscles. Look at an anatomical plate—such as may be found in Sir Charles Bell’s ‘Anatomy of Expression,’ enhanced for our present purpose by the addition of a text which has become of classic nature—and mark off therein the eyebrow muscles, called the *orbicularis palpebrarum* (19) and *pyramidalis nasi* (1). When we speak of the lowering expression foreboding rage and anger, the lineaments are placed in the expressive phase just indicated, by the contraction of the muscles in question. It is the *occipito-frontalis* muscle (20,

27, 32), which contracts in the peering look of inquisitiveness or in the hopeful aspect of joy. And when the space betwixt the eyebrows becomes wrinkled, as in the frown of displeasure or in the act of solving a knotty problem, it is the *corrugator* (26) which produces the well-known sign of the mind's trouble. The 'grief muscles' of Mr. Darwin are the orbiculars, corrugators, and the pyramidalis of the nose, which act together so as to lower and contract the eyebrows, and which are partially checked in their action by the more powerful action of the central parts of the frontal muscles. These muscles induce an oblique position of the eyebrows, characteristic of grief, and associated with a depression of the corners of the mouth. So, also, we witness correlated mus-



Muscles of Head, Face and Neck (Gray). See references in text and at end of paper.

cular action in that most characteristic of expressions, whether seen in man or in lower animals, the action of snarling or defiance, wherein the canine or eye tooth is uncovered by the angle or corner of the mouth being 'drawn a little backwards, and at the same time a muscle (7) which runs parallel to and near the nose draws up the outer part of the upper lip, and exposes the canine tooth, as in sneering, on this side of the face. The contraction of this muscle,' adds Mr. Darwin, 'makes a distinct furrow on the cheek, and produces strong wrinkles under the eye, especially at its inner corner.' The *orbicularis palpebrarum* (19) above

mentioned closes the eyelids in sleep, and in the act of winking it is the upper fibres of this muscle which alone act. On the other hand, in executing the 'knowing wink,' when the lower eyelid comes into play, the lower fibres of this muscle are put in action. The distension of the nostrils (seen equally well in an overdriven horse and in an offended man) is effected by *levator* and other muscles, whilst one of these muscles (7), sending a little slip down to the upper lip, aids us, as just mentioned, in giving labial expression to a sneer.

The mouth, like the eye, is encircled by the fibres of a special muscle (18) (the *orbicularis oris*), which closes the mouth and presses the lips against the teeth, and this expresses the idea of 'firm set determination.' The mouth is opened by other muscles (*levators* and *depressors* of the lips) (7, 10, 16, 17), and it is transversely widened by the *zygomatic* muscles (11, 12) and by the *risorius* muscles (15), which latter derive their name from the part they play in the expression of laughter. It is interesting, lastly, to note that in man's muscular system we find the remains and rudiments of many muscles of the utmost importance to, and which have a high development in, lower animals. For instance, our ear has at least three small muscles (22, 23, 24) connected with it. These are rarely capable of moving the ear in man, but in such an animal as the horse they attain a great development, and effect those characteristic movements of the ears that constitute such a large part of equine expression. So also with the muscles which close the nostrils in lower animals, these latter being rudimentary in man (3, 4, 5, 6), but very highly developed in such animals as the seals, where necessity arises for closing the nostrils' apertures against the admission of water.

Although it is impossible to lay down any fixed rules on the subject, it may be affirmed as a general result that relaxation of the muscles is as a rule associated with pleasurable states of mind, whilst violent contraction generally accompanies the painful phases of mental action. The state of dreamy contentment, for instance, best illustrates such a general relaxation of the muscles as accompanies pleasurable emotions. Even in active joy, as in laughing, additional relaxation takes place, accompanied however by contraction of the 'zygomatic muscles' (11, 12), which draw the corners of the mouth upwards and backwards.

The mere mechanism of muscular acts is thus not difficult of comprehension, and in connection with this part of our subject it may not be amiss to deal briefly with modes of expression subsidiary to those of the 'mind's index,' such as the movements of the hand and of other regions of the body liable to be affected in a very definite

manner in the play of the passions. In the seventeenth century a certain John Bulwer published a curious volume entitled 'Chirologia, or the Natural Language of the Hand.' As the face was named the 'Dyall of the Affections,' so Bulwer applies to the hand 'the Manuall text of Utterance.' 'The gesture of the hand,' according to Bulwer, 'many times gives a hint of our intention, and speaks out a good part of our meaning, before our words, which accompany or follow it, can put themselves into a vocal posture to be understood.' Again, this quaint-spoken author remarks that 'the lineaments of the body doe disclose the disposition and inclination of the minde in generall, but the motions doe not only so, but doe further disclose the present humour and state of the minde and will, for as the tongue speaketh to the ears, so Gesture speaketh to the eye, and therefore a number of such persons whose eyes doe dwell upon the faces and fashions of men, doe well know the advantage of this observation, as being most part of their ability; neither can it bee denied but that it is a great discoverer of dissimulation and great direction of businesse. For, after one manner almost we clappe our hands in joy, wring them in sorrow, advance them in prayer and admiration: shake our head in disdaine, wrinkle our forehead in dislike, crispe our nose in anger, blush in shame, and so for the most part of the most subtle motions.'

In some subsequent advice given in his 'Philocophus; or the Deafe and Dumbe Man's Friend,' Bulwer asks of his readers, 'What though you cannot express your mindes in these verball contrivances of man's invention;' (Bulwer really anticipated the most modern view of the origin of language); 'yet you want not speech who have your *whole body* for a Tongue: having a language more naturall and significant, which is common to you with us, to wit, Gesture, the general and universall language of Humane Nature, which, when we would have our speech to have life and efficacy, wee joyne in commission with our wordes, and when wee would speak with most state and gravity, we renounce wordes and use *Nods* and other naturall signes alone.' Thus does Bulwer vindicate the eloquence of silent sign-speech, which in its earliest development probably aided very largely in the formation and development of language itself. As the infant's gesture precedes its speech, so in the early phases of man's development the sign-speech probably served as a means of communication ere the principle of imitating natural sounds led to the first beginning of language. Besides the play of the hands, the movements of breathing may be ranked as amongst the means for the due expression of the emotions. Sir Charles Bell speaks of the 'respira-

tory' group of nerves as highly distinctive of man, and maintains that they were developed to adapt the process and organs of breathing to man's intellectual nature. Such an explanation would, of course, be utterly rejected by the evolutionist, who maintains that the means possessed by man for the expression of the emotions are explicable on utilitarian and allied grounds as having been generated by outward favouring circumstances and perpetuated by habit, or as having arisen from the perpetuation of traits of expression found in lower forms of life. The altered movements of breathing seen in the paroxysm of terror or grief, are more or less secondary effects of the emotions; they are seen equally well in the fear of many quadrupeds; and they hardly fall into the category of direct effects illustrated so markedly by the flitting shadows of the face or by the gesture language of the hands and body. Not the least interesting feature of the present subject exists in the obvious connection between the formation of words expressive of certain strong emotions, and the physical or bodily expression by the face of similar feelings. Reference has already been made to this correspondence, but the topic will bear an additional mention before we pass to consider the probable origin of the modes of emotional expression, by way of summing up the present paper. As already quoted from Dr. Maudsley, the fact of a spoken word relating itself to the idea of which it is the expression, is a well-known feature of our everyday mental existence. Many of our most primitive emotional traits bear to the words whereby we express them the relation of cause to effect. Take as an example the expression 'Pooh!' What better explanation of this otherwise meaningless but at the same time expressive term can be afforded, than that it arises from the natural expiratory effort produced by, or at least naturally associated with, the protrusion of the lips in the act of rejecting some undesirable substance. The labial movement of expression gives rise to a sound which becomes convertible into the term for disgust. The 'hiss' of contempt is explicable on similar grounds; and the word 'ugly' is by no means the unlikely offspring of that 'ugh' which is so plainly associated with the expression of contempt and disgust.

These observations regarding the nature and mechanism of the emotions have already extended to a considerable length, and it now behoves us to summarise them shortly in the question of their development. The subject of the emotions and the origin of the means whereby we express them, like so many other subjects of physiological inquiry, received a decided impetus from the publication of Mr. Darwin's works. His 'Expression of the Emotions' has already become well-nigh as classic a work as Sir Charles Bell's

treatise ; and the query how far Mr. Darwin's views assist us in explaining the origin of the expressions, may best be answered by showing the chief grounds upon which Mr. Darwin's explanations are based. That his views do not overtake all the difficulties of the subject, Mr. Darwin would be the first to admit ; but it is equally undeniable that he makes out a strong case for the reception of his views, namely, that inheritance of traits from lower forms of life, together with modifying circumstances—such as the perpetuation of useful habits—acting upon human existence, have been the main causes of the development of expression. On three principles, according to Mr. Darwin, we may account for most of man's gestures and expressions. The first, he terms that of 'serviceable associated habits.' Under this first head, Mr. Darwin remarks the influence of habit and custom in perpetuating acquired movements, illustrated in the peculiar 'step' of horses, and the 'setting' and 'pointing' of dogs. Even gestures of the most unusual type have been known to be perpetuated in human history. 'A boy had the singular habit,' says Mr. Darwin, 'when pleased, of rapidly moving his fingers parallel to each other ; and, when much excited, of raising both hands, with the fingers still moving, to the sides of his face on a level with the eyes ; this boy, when almost an old man, could still hardly resist this trick when much pleased, but from its absurdity concealed it. He had eight children. Of these, a girl, when pleased, at the age of four-and-a-half years, moved her fingers in exactly the same way, and what is still odder, when much excited, she raised both her hands, with her fingers still moving, to the sides of her face, in exactly the same manner as her father had done, and sometimes even still continued to do when alone. I never heard,' concludes Mr. Darwin, 'of anyone excepting this one man and his little daughter who had this strange habit ; and certainly imitation was in this instance out of the question.' Again, during sound sleep, three generations of a particular family have been known to raise the right arm up to the forehead and then allow it to drop 'with a jerk, so that the wrist fell heavily on the bridge of the nose.' Such an act—altogether without known cause—might sometimes be 'repeated incessantly for an hour or more,' and the person's nose, as was naturally to be expected, gave palpable evidence of the treatment to which it had been subjected. The son of this person married a lady who had never heard of this incident, but in her husband she chronicled the same history as did her mother-in-law. One of this gentleman's daughters has inherited the same peculiarity, modifying the action, so that the palm and not the wrist strikes the nose. In lower animals many such illustra-

tions of truly serviceable habits might be given. The perpetuation of such habits is simply a matter of 'reflex nervous action'—as much, indeed, as the unconscious act of drawing back the hand from a burning surface, or of closing the eyes in a sudden flash of light. On this first principle, then, we may explain many forms of expression, as depending upon sensations of varying nature which first led to voluntary movements; and these latter, in turn, and through the ordinary laws of nervous action, have become fixed habits, notwithstanding that they may be perfectly useless to the animal form. In their most typical development, such expressions appear before us as the results of inheritance. No better illustrations of such inherited habits in man could be found than in the numerous acts which accompany furious rage and vexation, or the fighting attitude in which an opponent is defied without any intention of attack. And on some such principle as the foregoing may we reasonably enough explain the act of uncovering the eye-tooth before alluded to, in the act of snarling or defiance. 'This act in man reveals,' says Mr. Darwin, 'his animal descent, for no one, even if rolling on the ground in a deadly grapple with an enemy, and attempting to bite him, would try to use his canine teeth more than his other teeth. We may readily believe,' adds our author, 'from our affinity to the anthropomorphous apes, that our male semi-human progenitors possessed great canine teeth, and men are now occasionally born having them of unusually large size, with interspaces in the opposite jaw for their reception.'

Mr. Darwin's second principle on which the expression of the emotions and their origin may be accounted for, he terms that of 'antithesis.' By this term he means to indicate the fact that certain mental states lead to certain definite acts, which, as just explained by the first principle, may be serviceable to the animal—or which may in time lose both their serviceable tendency and their original meaning, as we have also seen. Now, if we suppose that a directly opposite phase of mind to these first mental states is produced, actions may follow which will express the latter and not the original states. These antithetical and antagonistic actions are of no use, but at the same time they may be expressive enough. The dog who approaches an intruder with irate growl, erect head and tail, stiff ears, and a general attitude of attack, on discovering that he has been menacing a friend, at once changes his expression. He fawns upon the supposed antagonist, becomes servile to a degree, and completely reverses his former attitude. Such is an example of the antagonistic nature of certain modes of expression, which are explicable, Mr. Darwin holds, only on the supposition of their antithetical nature. The

servile or affectionate movements of the dog are of no direct service to the animal, but represent the mere revulsion of feeling which represents nerve-force or emotion speeding into channels of opposite nature from those into which in the angry condition they had been directed. The shrugging of man's shoulders may be selected as the best example of the antagonistic methods of expression. Here we confess by sign language our inability to perform an action, or as often exhibit a total indifference to the matter in hand—the polite *comme il vous plaira!* accompanied by this gesture, placing the latter before us in its true significance. As to the origin of the expression, it may perhaps be most clearly explained, as Mr. Darwin holds, by regarding it as the antithetical and passive phase of actions and expressions which had for their object some very active and direct piece of business—most probably that of attack.

The third and last principle used to explain the origin of the emotions is more strictly a matter of pure physiology than the preceding conditions. Mr. Darwin terms this last a principle involving 'the direct action of the nervous system.' It acts independently of the will from the first, and is independent to a certain extent of habit likewise. A strong impulse or steady impression sent through the brain causes a correspondingly large expenditure or liberation of nerve force, which escapes by those channels which are first opened for its reception, and thus produces very varied and marked expressions. In such a category we might place the remarkable changes which grief is known to effect in the colour of the hair, as for instance where, in a man led forth to execution in India, the hair was seen to undergo a change of colour as the culprit walked. Muscular tremor and the quaking of limbs—paralleled by the more severe convulsions from fright of hysterical persons and young children—are forms of expression which cannot be explained save on the idea of nerve-force speeding along the channels, which, through some unknown condition of the nervous system, have been opened for its reception in preference to others. So also the phenomena of blushing illustrate Mr. Darwin's third principle, which might well be termed the diffusion of nerve force, modified by habit, by inheritance, and by personal peculiarities. Here a mental emotion is transferred to the skin-surface, and especially—but not invariably—to the face, producing the well-known tinge which Wilkinson, in his 'Human Body and its connection with Man,' describes as the 'celestial rosy red,' and which he defines as the 'proper hue' of love: whilst 'lively Shame blushes and mean Shame looks Earthly.' Carried to an extreme degree, as in the case of the

Belgian 'stigmatics,' the same emotion produces the bleeding points of the religious devotees, of whom St. Francis himself is the type. The earlier writers on expression contended that blushing was specially designed from the beginning, that—according to one author—'the soul might have sovereign power of displaying in the cheeks the various internal emotions of the moral feelings.' To explain blushing on more reasonable grounds, it is necessary to have recourse to the idea that a sensitive regard for the opinions of others acts primarily on the mind—inducing a play of emotion which, coursing through the nerves regulating the circulation of the face especially, results in the dilatation of the minute blood-vessels of the part to which attention has been directed. Concentration of attention on the face lies at the root of the mental act involved in blushing, and that such attention has not escaped the effects of habit and inheritance is the safest of conclusions founded on the common experience of our race.

It remains, finally, to direct attention to the general proofs which the evolution theory, resting the origin of human emotions chiefly upon the idea of our derivation and descent from lower stages of existence, is entitled to produce by way of supporting the latter conclusion. It is very noticeable that the will has, at the most, but little share in the development of the emotions, just as in many cases (e.g., the phenomenon of blushing) it is powerless to hinder their expression. Nor have most of the typical modes of expression been newly acquired—that is, they do not appear as our own and original acts—since many traits are exhibited from our earliest years, and may then be as typically represented as in later life. Equally valuable is the evidence which the observation of abnormal phases of the human mind reveals in support of the inherited nature of our chief emotions. The blind display the typical emotions (e.g. blushing) equally with those who see. Laura Bridgman, the trained deaf-mute, laughed, clapped her hands, and blushed truly by instinct and nature, and not from imitation or instruction. This girl likewise shrugged her shoulders as naturally as her seeing and hearing neighbours, and nodded her head affirmatively and shook it negatively by a similar instinct. Not less remarkable, as testifying to the inherent nature of human expressions, is the experience of the physician who labours amongst the insane. The idiot will cackle like a goose as his only language, or give vent to monosyllables which are little above the simple cries of the animal world in complexity or meaning. Every act and expression is not originally of the man but of the truly animal. 'Whence come the animal traits and instincts in man? . . . Whence come the savage snarl, the destructive disposition, the obscene lan-

guage, the wild howl, the offensive habits, displayed by some of the insane?' 'Are these traits,' asks Dr. Maudsley, 'really the reappearance of a primitive instinct of animal nature—a faint echo from a far distant past, testifying to a kinship which man has almost outgrown, or has grown too proud to acknowledge? No doubt such animal traits are marks of extreme human degeneracy, but it is no explanation to call them so; degenerations come by law, and are as natural as law can make them. . . . Why should a human being deprived of his reason ever become so brutal in character as some do, unless he has the brute nature within him?' 'We may,' concludes this eminent authority, 'without much difficulty trace savagery in civilisation, as we can trace animalism in savagery; and in the degeneration of insanity, in the *unkindness*, so to say, of the human kind, there are exhibited marks denoting the elementary instincts of its composition.' These are weighty words; but the grounds on which they are uttered amply justify their conclusions. Turn in which direction we will, we meet with evidences of man's lowly origin—now in a plain proof of his kinship with lower forms, now in a mere suggestion presented in some by-path of nature, showing us a possible connection with humbler grades—and even in the passing flash of emotion which, sweeping across the mirror of the mind, reveals the workings of the soul within, we may find, as in a random thought, a clue to the origin of our race.

ANDREW WILSON.

Explanation of woodcut (p. 358).

Superficial muscles of Head and Neck. (Gray.)

- 1, Pyramidalis nasi; 2, Compressor naris; 3, 4, 5, dilators and compressors of the nose; 6, depressor alæ nasi; 7, levator labii superioris et alæ nasi; 8, orbicularis oris; 9, levator anguli oris; 10, levator labii superioris; 11, 12, zygomatici; 13, masseter; 14, buccinator; 15, risorius; 16, depressor anguli oris; 17, depressor labii inferioris; 18, levator menti; 19, orbicularis palpebrarum; 20, 27, 32, occipito-frontalis; 21, temporal fascia; 22, atollens aurem; 23, 24, attrahens and retrahens aurem; 25, deep part of masseter; 26, corrugator; 28, sterno-mastoid; 29, trapezius; 30, platysma; 31, external jugular vein.

A Heart's Problem.

BY CHARLES GIBBON.

CHAPTER VII.

WILL-O'-THE-WISP.

HOLLYFORD had become once more a living place in the county. Colonel Cuthbert and his daughter had settled down so rapidly in their home, that it seemed as if they had been there all their lives. He delighted in the customary occupations of an active country gentleman, and Miss Cuthbert, in spite of the frivolous disposition which she attempted to make Maurice believe to be her real one, showed in every way that she was capable of discharging the duties incumbent upon her.

She certainly did appear to be fond of gaiety, and Hollyford was earning the reputation of being one of the most hospitable of houses, one where the most pleasant people were to be met with, and therefore one of those to which it was most desirable to be invited. There was not a man, old or young, who did not speak of Miss Cuthbert as the most charming of girls; and there was not a lady who did not think the Colonel 'quite a dear,' and very far from being beyond the pale of matrimonial speculation. All the gossip about his past life, which had been awakened by his reappearance two years ago, had already sunk far below the surface of current topics. The few who remembered anything about the past only referred to it at rare intervals, when their memories were stirred by some passing word or incident. After all, our good and evil deeds are of much less permanent interest to other people than we in our vanity are apt to imagine. Of course there had been a little shyness at first on the part of some people, but curiosity is an excellent magnet, and the fine nature of the Colonel speedily overcame all doubts which might have been entertained as to the propriety of replacing his name on their visiting-list.

Throughout this early period the Calthorpes were his most frequent guests, and he was more at Calthorpe than at any other house. He liked his old friend, notwithstanding his failings—better known, perhaps, to him than to anyone else; and the kindly feelings which his friend's son had awakened when he first saw him increased as their intimacy ripened. Latterly, indeed, when to-

gether, the Colonel and Maurice might have been taken for comrades of equal age.

Mr. Calthorpe was delighted ; closed his eyes and smiled complacently ; his plans were prospering beyond his fondest expectations, and he had nothing to do now but to leave matters to take their own course.

He was rudely startled from this state of beatitude about a week after that conversation between his son and Arkwood.

Invitations had been issued for a larger gathering than usual at Hollyford, the occasion being (although the fact was not generally known) Miss Cuthbert's birthday. But Maurice knew it, and was to have been present. At the last moment, however, a telegram brought the intelligence that he was unexpectedly detained in London. The Colonel was much disappointed ; Mr. Calthorpe was in dismay, which he endeavoured to conceal by looking very wise and nodding his head slowly, as if to suggest that he was not surprised, although he was not at liberty to enter into an explanation.

' He has a very serious affair in hand, and no doubt that is the cause of his detention. You know how very anxious he is to make way in his profession.'

He looked as if he believed it, but he was made uncomfortable by the idea which flashed upon him that Maurice had by this one act lost all the favour he had gained in Miss Cuthbert's eyes.

' How unfortunate ! ' she said, scarcely pausing in her conversation with Sir Frederick Powell, the young baronet of Woodstow.

The latter gentleman became a source of anxiety to Mr. Calthorpe, for he sat beside the heiress at dinner, and lingered near her in the drawing-room.

' A dangerous rival for Maurice,' Mr. Calthorpe reflected as he observed them ; ' and she is gracious to him, certainly. A smart-looking fellow, too ; not much in him, but fortunate in his tailor. That's something—tailors and dressmakers have more to do with love than they get credit for. She seems to be in a particularly good humour to-night. She does not miss *him* ; what an idiot he is not to be here ! '

With all his fears that his fine-laid schemes might turn awry, he was obliged to own that Miss Cuthbert appeared to be only as happy as a girl of her years ought to be under the circumstances, and that there was no reason why there should be any shade cast upon her by the absence of one who, if he were a lover at all, was so lukewarm as to stay away on such an occasion. The old gentleman's hopes, which had been so high that morning, were set down

many pegs that night. He, however, possessed that inestimable blessing—perfect confidence in himself; it had carried him through so many crises, that the probabilities were in favour of its carrying him through this one, which he regarded as the greatest of them all. He slept well, and it is marvellous how pale the gloomiest shadows appear after a good sleep. He made an excellent breakfast, and was glancing over the ‘Times,’ meditating at intervals as to the most effective mode of quickening Maurice in his love-making, when that gentleman himself appeared.

‘Why did you not come last night?’ he inquired casually, as if he laid no particular stress on the circumstance. ‘You missed a pleasant evening, and disappointed Cuthbert.’

‘He’ll not be sorry when he learns that it was his business which detained me in town. We have settled that Chancery suit; his cousin withdraws, so the case is closed on the terms proposed by the Colonel.’

Mr. Calthorpe was happy again; fortune was on his side still.

‘It really was business, then? That will be capital news for Cuthbert, for I know he had a special dread of that action, as it would have uncovered so many old scars. He missed you last night, but I suppose you would rather his daughter had done so.’

‘She was doubtless better occupied than in thinking about me.’

‘She was; and, if I am not mistaken, you will soon have no particular place in her thoughts at all.’

‘I suppose you mean that she is likely to become engaged?’ said Maurice thoughtfully.

‘A girl like her is sure to have many opportunities of becoming so. Are you quite indifferent on that score?’

Maurice was silent for a moment, and although the father scanned his face eagerly, he was unable to discover any signs of anxiety.

‘Not indifferent, sir; but I shall answer you more satisfactorily when I return from Hollyford. I am going there at once, to give the Colonel particulars of yesterday’s proceedings, and I shall of course see Miss Cuthbert.’

‘Glad to hear that; don’t let me detain you. I had no idea that you were so much interested in the matter. You will find Cuthbert is your friend.’

Mr. Calthorpe was much more eager to hasten the departure of Maurice than the latter was to go. To the father this visit meant the decision of a question of vital importance to them all; the son knew that in any case the decision could not be a satisfactory one.

The glorious sunshine was not in keeping with the curiously disturbed state of the man's mind as he rode towards Hollyford. He wished to put the nature of his relationship to Mabel Cuthbert to the test, and yet he shrank from it.

The Colonel was at home, and if Maurice had been a stranger he would have been surprised or amused, or both, when the servant informed him that he was to conduct him to 'the wilderness.' But he knew that this was the favourite retreat of the Colonel and his daughter, and proceeded thither unattended. Passing through what was a fair representation on a small scale of a jungle, he entered a green glade, at one end of which, to gratify his daughter, Colonel Cuthbert had erected a duplicate of the bungalow he had occupied in India, with all the accessories of punkahs, lounges, and hammocks. The bungalow stood on a green terrace, and in the semicircle of shrubbery and trees which it commanded, spaces had been cut affording glimpses of varying landscapes. This was what Miss Cuthbert called her picture-gallery, and in all weathers she was fond of enjoying its beauties, either alone or in the company of her father. Besides the natural pictures thus always before her, she had a large palm-house full of tropical plants, to aid her imagination in realising what her father's home in India had been like.

Maurice passed out of the shadow of the jungle into the sunlight, which fell full upon the bungalow and the green terrace. As he approached, the Colonel was assisting Mabel out of a hammock in which she had been resting, and as he ascended the slope she was standing on the terrace, holding out her hand. In the light her fair hair shone like gold, and something in the face dazzled Maurice's eyes, as if he had been trying to look straight at the sun.

'Welcome, renegade!' she said merrily; 'you have been tried by court-martial, and condemned to severe punishment for your desertion last night.'

'I am afraid I shall be a frequent offender if the judgment of the court is to be so agreeably communicated to me. I am the only loser by my desertion last night, and I believe the Colonel himself will act as counsel for my defence. These papers, sir, will explain my absence; and I have only to say that your cousin has given his unqualified assent to all your proposals.'

The Colonel grasped his hand warmly, and there was evidently some agitation underlying the pleasure which he experienced in receiving these tidings. There was even a slight huskiness in his voice as he spoke.

'Thank you, Maurice, most heartily. Some day, perhaps, you

will learn why I have been so anxious to avoid further proceedings in this case. Enough for the present that, had my proposals been persistently refused, it would have been necessary for Mabel's sake to have gone into matters the remembrance of which disturbed me greatly. Thank you again.'

'It was the liberality of your proposals, sir, which satisfied your cousin, and no arguments of mine.'

'You have at any rate spared me much pain. Excuse me for the present. I must go in and look at these papers.'

He turned to his daughter and kissed her tenderly on the brow a very unusual manifestation of emotion to be made by him in the presence of a third person. Then he walked slowly away, his head slightly bowed, and a sad quietness in his movement, as if he were walking away from the grave of some one very dear to him.

Mabel watched him till he had disappeared in the jungle, and then turned to Maurice with such a look on her face as he had never before observed: it was that of the subdued anxiety of earnest love—as if a soft shadow had fallen upon a clear lake that had been a moment ago all brightness.

'I must not ask you, Mr. Calthorpe, what is the meaning of the strange effect your news has produced upon my father. I know that he will tell me himself, if he thinks it right that I should know it.'

'The case was simply the question of the succession to a part of the property left him by his uncle. The matters to which he refers as sources of his agitation have not been revealed even to me. Of course, if the case had proceeded, he would have been obliged to tell me, or whoever conducted it, and the fact that he has not to do so relieves him.'

'And it was for my sake that it would have been necessary for him to speak!' she said in a low nervous voice, speaking to herself rather than to Maurice; and her eyes, still fixed upon the place where her father had disappeared, slowly filled with tears.

Maurice became pale; he stood for a moment motionless; then a strange light overspread his face; he uttered a short cry, and impulsively seized her hand.

'It is Lucy!'

He stood trembling with a strange awe upon him: the man's whole being was quivering with love and great joy: next moment he was like one hurled from a height and lying stunned below.

The hand did make a convulsive movement in his as he pronounced the name—he felt sure of it. And yet he knew that it

must have been his own imagination which made him think so, or the effect of her natural surprise at his singular behaviour ; for the eyes which had been so full of tenderness and tears turned upon him so coldly that his heart was frozen, and when the hand was withdrawn from his in a quiet pitying way which conveyed the keenest reproach, ‘Mr. Calthorpe !’ was all she said. The voice was soft and sympathetic, as if she understood his mistake and was sorry for it.

He could not speak, and he could not help gazing into her face, which was now so changed and still so beautiful. It was as if he had been for a moment privileged to see his living love, and on the instant to know it dead.

‘I beg your pardon, Miss Cuthbert,’ he said mechanically, pausing at each word. ‘I feel as if I had been asleep and dreaming. I scarcely know whether or not I am awake yet. I hope I have not offended you.’

There was a pathetic weariness and resignation in his voice and look : the penalty of his brief exaltation was utter prostration.

‘You made a mistake, Mr. Calthorpe,’ she responded kindly, ‘and you startled me a little.’

‘Yes, it was a mistake. Looking at you now, I cannot understand it—the difference is so great. And yet you were so like her !’

‘And now ?’ she said, slowly winding her handkerchief round her finger, but still watching his face as if expecting to discover there the solution of some riddle which perplexed her.

He roused himself at the question.

‘And now I feel how much I must bore you with this nonsense of mine.’

‘Do you call it nonsense ?’

There was a faint movement of her lips, which might have indicated agitation, had there been any cause for it ; but of course it could not be so in her case, as she was so calm and so full of pitying sympathy.

‘What else ?’ he answered, with an attempt at a laugh. ‘I know it must appear so to you, and I do not know how you can endure my company at all.’

Miss Cuthbert dropped her handkerchief, and stooped quickly to pick it up ; he stooping also, their hands touched. As they rose, he was startled again by an expression of something like pain which flashed across her face ; but it was only a flash, and again he concluded that he must have been mistaken. Her conventional exclamation satisfied him.

‘I am so sorry to trouble you, Mr. Calthorpe,’ Digitized by Google

If there had been any emotion which she desired to conceal, it had been as transient as the expression which hinted at it; but she certainly was a shade paler than usual. He also became conventional.

'Let me bring a chair for you here in the sunshine, Miss Cuthbert. You must be fatigued after the excitement of yesterday.'

'Thank you. Not at all fatigued, although it was an evening of what is called unmitigated enjoyment, which I understand usually means an awfully dreary time. Now let us go back to what we were talking about. You must not again say that you think I think you are a bore, because that is doing yourself and me an injustice.'

'It relieves me to hear you say so; and I promise——'

'Stop. I know you are going to say that you will not make a mistake again. I take that for granted; but I do not wish you to make up your mind not to speak to me again about a person in whom I am so much interested as my—we must really use her name; "double-goer" is such a mouthful. You just now called her——?'

She waited for him to repeat the name. Even conventionality would not serve him here: he was too sensitive on the subject, and kind as Miss Cuthbert was, he could not speak of it without pain. There was, too, something in her tone and manner which made him hesitate. She helped him out of the difficulty.

'I think you said Lucy.'

There was not the slightest inflection of the voice: it was hard and clear; and although she was evidently interested, there was nothing in the steady eyes which were fixed upon him even to suggest the sympathy she had shown a little while ago, and which would have won the confidence she desired. She seemed to become conscious of that herself.

'I sometimes think, Mr Calthorpe,' she said quietly, smiling, 'that you must have thought what I intended to be frankness at our first meeting was boldness.'

'Oh, no,' he said hastily, with a deprecatory movement of the hand.

'So much the better, for I am going to be again frank or bold, whichever you please to call it. At the first you were like an old friend to me, and now I may almost claim you as one. Is not that very bold?'

'It is very pleasant.'

'Please do not begin to flatter: which is a weapon that will overcome me at once; for I don't like flattery, and I don't like the

people who use it. You can try it if you want to see how shy I can be.'

The lips contracted into a pretty circle, the eyes twinkled archly, and she was like a schoolgirl waiting for the answer to some comical conundrum.

'Is not the implication flattering to me?'

'That depends. Tell me first, exactly what you are thinking of me at this moment, and I shall answer.'

'That is somewhat hard, for much of what I am thinking would sound like flattery.'

'Very well, then; tell me the part which won't sound like flattery.'

'Then, I was thinking that you are a will-o'-the-wisp,' he said, much amused, and falling into her humour.

'That certainly is not flattering; for the will-o'-the-wisp is mischievous, and misleads benighted travellers.'

'I meant only in your moods—you change so rapidly from grave to gay. Suppose I try another simile to express what I was thinking about you. You were like a brilliant fantasia, the theme of which I know is beautiful, but in my dulness I cannot catch it, because the variations are so rapid.'

'Ah! That is better, and if you will only omit the beautiful, it is very like what I appear to myself. Now I can give you your answer—it is this. I esteem you enough to wish you not to flatter me; and if you think that I am flattering you in saying so, then you are not my friend.'

She was quite in earnest, and spoke with a matter-of-fact air, as if she would say, 'Here is the plain state of the case, and you can like it or not, as you please.' She had assumed that look and expression of self-conscious honesty which people use when they say disagreeable things under the banner of Common-sense—only, she was not saying anything disagreeable.

'We only flatter when we give our friends credit for qualities which they do not possess. I was not doing that, and now I must turn your own words against yourself, and say that you are not the friend I wish you to be if you think there is anything but sincere pleasure in knowing that you regard me as your friend.'

'I take it as you mean it, and we shall make this compact—that we shall never say anything to each other for the mere purpose of pleasing, but speak only what we believe to be true.'

'Agreed.'

'You understand that our compact is one of friendship,' she said, emphasizing the word, and giving him her hand; 'and I hope

that you will soon be able to speak quite freely to me about your friend—or I suppose I am entitled to say *our* friend, Lucy.'

'There is little more to tell you than you already know,' he answered calmly, the feeling of reserve creeping upon him again.

'You admired her very much?'

'Yes, although our acquaintance was a short one. Your singular resemblance to her frequently reminds me of her, but never so much so as to-day. The feelings which moved you when your father left us, made you—made me, in fact, forget myself.'

'They were kindly feelings.'

'She had a kindly face, and I am sure a kindly heart.'

'That is as much as to say that mine is not always a kindly face. No apologies: I am pleased to find that you are so promptly obedient to the terms of our compact. I suppose I must not pry too closely into what passed between you.'

'There was nothing particular passed between us. We were good friends, that was all.'

He could not bring himself yet to 'prompt obedience' to the terms of the compact in speaking of his regard for Lucy.

'That was all!' she repeated slowly; and then, with a slight laugh, 'and I suppose, if you had not seen me, you would have entirely forgotten her by this time?'

'I must own that her image was not quite so vivid when I first met you as it is now.'

'And in time it would have passed away altogether. What a dreadful thing it would be for a woman to learn that she was forgotten by anybody she cared very much for! I wonder how she would feel—the very thought of it makes me shudder. Still more horrible—if such a thing could be—that it was her lover who forgot her, and she should hear him say so! Happily, such a thing is impossible,' she concluded, laughing at the phantom she had herself created.

'Quite impossible to you, Miss Cuthbert,' he said, laughing too. She had imitated the shudder and the look of horror so naturally. 'You would make an excellent actress. Have you never thought of getting up a play at Hollyford?'

'Oh, yes; I am arranging one now. I shall tell you all about it another time. There is my father coming, and as he will want to speak to you about business matters, my chatter would not amuse him. Good-bye for the present.'

'Is it a comedy or a tragedy you have selected for the forthcoming performance?'

'I am not yet sure which it is to be. Have you any preference? I should like to know, because you play a leading part.'

'Comedy seems to me best adapted for private theatricals. The audience can then laugh at their friends with a good grace, and the actors may flatter themselves that the mirth is a tribute to their talent and not to their folly.'

'Perhaps it will be a comedy, then; but one never can tell what is to happen until the end is reached.'

'Oh, it is an original play! I had no idea that you were an author.'

'Well, the play is a new one, but I am only the author of a part of it. That is why I am unable to tell you what the end of it is to be, and whether we should call it a tragedy or a comedy.'

'Who is lucky enough to be your collaborator?'

'I have betrayed enough already,' she exclaimed playfully. 'It spoils one's zest in preparing a surprise when everybody knows it is coming. You must not ask me about it again until I tell you it is finished.'

'I shall try to curb my curiosity, but you have greatly excited it.'

'Thank you.'

She walked away with a light step, exchanged a few words with her father as she passed him on the terrace, and gave one bright glance back at the bungalow before the shrubbery hid her from sight.

'How happy she is!' thought Maurice. 'Her path has been all brightness.'

He had been startled into forgetfulness of the object he had intended to keep steadily in mind during this interview. One thing was clear: Miss Cuthbert was still heart-free. For himself, the strange power she possessed of causing him pleasure and pain was as inexplicable as ever except by the simple rule that he loved her. There was nothing terrible in that idea, and if she had retained for ten minutes that look which had struck from him the impulsive cry 'Lucy!'-he would have known and would have told her. She was an heiress: there was nothing in that fact incompatible with love; it ought to have been an agreeable framework for a handsome woman: but in his case—

'Come, wool-gatherer! I have something to say to you,' broke in the Colonel quietly. 'I have left you five minutes in the clouds: I want you to come back to the earth now.'

CHAPTER VIII.

SELF-TORTURE.

MISS CUTHBERT wrote :

' I find it almost impossible to write about him, and yet my brain seems to be aching with the desire to tell *you*, Lucy, what my thoughts are about this man. I have again and again determined to do it, and have sat for hours with the pen in my hand ; but the paper remained blank, and I had to rise as much exhausted in body and mind as if I had done a severe day's work. I do not know why this should be when I am writing to you, for I wish to tell you everything, and you understand that no thought of sparing myself would check my words ; but in spite of all my efforts, the idea which I am about to set down escapes before the pen touches the paper. The very words seem to fly, leaving me powerless to tell you anything connectedly.

' To-day I feel stronger—because I am angry ; and I think I can show you that the harshness with which I judged him at first was not too harsh, as I began to fear. After what he has said to-day, you *cannot* think that I misjudge him ; after the confession I am about to make of my own feelings, you cannot think that I wish to misjudge him.

' Since my last letter, we have frequently met. We have become what people call "great friends." I know from Mrs. Harper that there are people who think us lovers—but rumours of that kind are raised upon very slight foundations. They do no harm, apparently, for so far as I am aware they have not interfered with the attentions of other suitors. I have even had proposals, although I have done my best to prevent them, because they have been always distressing to me. I dare say that in time I shall find them amusing, as other girls do.

' But he has never done more than pay *me* the most ordinary compliments, although he has had opportunities such as have not been granted to anyone else to speak freely. I have tempted him to speak. To-day I had made up my mind to force from him "a declaration ;" but I shrink from striking that final blow with such a strange feeling of fright, that I cannot do it. Then the question startles me, Do I hesitate most on account of the pain my refusal will cause him or myself ? At one time it seemed that to see him overwhelmed by my contemptuous ridicule would afford me complete satisfaction for the anguish he has caused you. Now I am troubled about myself, and the nearer the end I have in view appears, the more I dread it. Can you understand this ? It cannot be that I love him. . . . How timidly that was written,

and I am still trembling as if I were sitting at the top of a hill in an east wind, instead of being in my own warm room. That is the confession I had to make to you, and it was not easily done; for writing down this doubt of myself seems to give it probability and form. I am compelled to do it, although I know how it will sting you to think it even possible that your friend should be false to you.

'Have no fear. There can be no danger of my caring for him. I am so often angry with him, and see his weakness and selfishness so plainly. And if there had been danger, it was removed to-day when he told me calmly that you and he had been "good friends, that was all." Hearing that, and remembering how everything but words led you to believe he loved you, I felt as bitterly towards him as ever. I was almost startled into expressing it; but I carried it off so lightly, that he is still unaware how deeply I am interested on your account. He said I was a capital actress, thinking that the horror I felt was only make-believe. He is so easily deceived, that I wonder whether he is a fool or only making a fool of me. That would be punishment indeed for the deception I am practising. I do feel mean and cruel whenever he makes me think that he is thinking of you. Should it prove that I am mistaken, that he really did care for you, and that only your absence prevented him from telling you, I could never forgive myself for what would then be heartless treachery on my part.

'Could I forgive myself if it should turn out that he really cares for me?

'I must not think of that, for the mere idea distracts me. You see how much reason I have to be troubled about myself, and how I am haunted by doubts and fears of what I am doing. Luckily, I can easily bring myself back to common sense. I suppose he might care for me, and had you never existed, I might have come to care for him. But I promised to show you that my first opinion of him had not been too harsh, and this should do it.

'Mrs. Harper has told me something about the Calthorpes. They have a fine place, and old Mr. Calthorpe lives and acts as if he were a millionaire. He is really in poverty, and the whole of his estates will be taken from him unless—

'I am ashamed to write the words, and yet glad to do so, because they recall my contempt—unless Mr. Maurice, as they call him, finds an heiress in time, with money enough to save the property! That is what he is seeking, and he and his father evidently think they have found the lady in me. Everybody knows their object, and—oh, it is horribly contemptible!

'I must bring it to an end soon; the thought of it is worrying

me too much. I know I shall get ill if this state of doubt continues, and then there would be no pleasure in my triumph. And yet I wish that I understood him better—I wish that I could be sure that I am not doing wrong. I see what will happen : he will tell me how desperately he loves me, how he does not care for anything in the world but me—and so on. Then I shall look pityingly at him, make a most formal bow, and say : “Really, Mr. Calthorpe, you take me by surprise. I regret that I must decline to accept an honour so unexpected and so unmerited.” Then he will plead, beg me to give him some hope (lovers always do that, I believe), and I shall become cold and haughty, repeating my refusal firmly.

‘Then he will go away crestfallen, and I——’

The Colonel entered his daughter’s room, and his humorous smile indicated that he had something amusing to communicate. Her back was towards him, her elbows resting on the writing-table, and her face on her hands. She did not observe his entrance.

‘I am sorry to disturb you, Mabel, but I come as an ambassador. My mission is one of the gravest importance, and—— Why, what has happened? Are you ill?’

She had risen hastily at the sound of his voice, and he saw that she had been crying.

‘Yes, papa, I am ill, but it is nothing to be alarmed about,’ she answered agitatedly, as she closed her writing-case. Then she wiped her eyes hastily and tried to smile. ‘There, I am better now. You must not look so serious, for it was only a silly fancy of mine, which you would laugh at, if I were to tell you what it was.’

‘I would not laugh at anything which could affect you so much as this appears to have done,’ he said gravely.

‘But this is so foolish, I am ashamed of it.’

‘Then, we need not speak of it until you can laugh at it, not cry. Perhaps the important matter which I have to lay before you may give your thoughts a pleasanter turn. You had better sit down and prepare yourself for the awful news. Now, are you ready?’

‘Oh, quite.’

His tenderness, his pleasant humour, soothed and comforted her, and she was able to smile at the mock solemnity with which he invested his subject.

‘Well, then, I have a letter here from Sir Frederick Powell, and although you might not think so from my manner, the contents are of a serious nature. Can you guess what they are?’

‘I have not the least idea.’

The Colonel seated himself on the couch beside her, and the humorous expression passed from his face as he gazed earnestly into her eyes.

'He has reminded me, Mabel, of what I was willing to forget, that some day you will be going away from me. I have been forced to think of it sometimes, and I do not like it.'

'Why should I go away from you, papa?'

'You will marry, no doubt,' he continued softly; 'you will have new ties, new interests in life, and your father will take his place in the background of your thought and care. It is natural, and most fathers find pleasure in seeing their children well settled in life. But it is a great change under any circumstances, and you know that I have not had time to accustom myself to the prospect of it. You are still a very young child in my eyes.'

'But it need not be,' she said, laying her head upon his shoulder, and putting her arm affectionately round his neck.

'Not immediately, I hope; but we need not shut our eyes to the probability of its coming some day. Meanwhile, I have to decide what my answer is to be to Sir Frederick, for he has asked me, with an old-fashioned formality which I like, to give him leave to pay his addresses to you. What shall I say?'

She started; there was a frightened look in her eyes, and she seemed to shiver. The Colonel was amazed.

'Tell him that he must not think of it,' she cried excitedly. 'Tell him that he must never speak to me if he thinks of it; that I never can—that I never will—marry anybody.'

She hid her face on her father's breast and sobbed.

He remained silent for a little while, his hand smoothing her hair, his brain actively occupied with wondering and confused speculations. Then she became quiet, and he spoke in the low sad voice of one who has been suddenly made aware of a great loss which he has secretly feared, and yet had hoped to avert.

'I ought to have been prepared for this, Mabel. I ought to have been ready to learn that some one had found a way to your heart without asking my leave to pass. Well, in good time you will let me know who it is that is to take you away from me.'

'No one shall take me away from you,' was the passionate cry. 'I shall never marry.'

'You need not make rash vows, my child,' he said, patting her on the head, a kindly smile overspreading but not obscuring the father's inevitable regret. 'If you do not marry, I shall be selfishly glad; and if you do, I shall try to be unselfishly happy in seeing you happy. And I shall be, if the man happens to be to my liking. There now, we are going to have done with this subject.

I know what answer to give Sir Frederick. You must take a rest, for we shall probably have both the Calthorpes with us this evening. But if you are not well enough you need not join us.'

She was alone again : she sat with eyes wide open, but like one in sleep, so dull and expressionless was her face.

CHAPTER IX.

OLD FOLK PROPOSE.

' You are not in such good spirits as I expected to find you to-night, Cuthbert,' said Mr. Calthorpe, passing the wine. ' I thought that with the quiet settlement of this disagreeable business you would have rejoiced in the feeling of freedom from all anxiety as to the past.'

' Have I been dull, then ? ' asked the Colonel. ' I did not mean to be so, and I thought we were particularly merry during dinner.'

' Miss Cuthbert was, but you were not.'

' I was thinking about her—she is not well.'

' Not well ! I never saw her looking better, and I cannot imagine how she could be in brighter spirits than she was to-night. All your thoughts about her should be pleasant ones. I regard her as the best part of the good fortune which has come to solace you for the troubles of the old time. Upon my word, Cuthbert, I think you are an exceptionally lucky fellow.'

' Yes, I am a lucky fellow,' responded the Colonel meditatively, gazing out into the soft twilight, for the lamps had not yet been lighted and the curtains were not drawn.

' Think what you have found,' continued Mr. Calthorpe, who was in the most complacent mood, evidently pleased with himself and with everybody else. ' She is handsome, she is remarkably clever, and she is devoted to you.'

' Ay, I am sure of that. No father ever had a more loving child. It is because I prize her so much that I dread everything which might cause her the least unhappiness.'

' You say that as sadly as if you knew of something which was likely to do it. Is there anything ? '

Two figures crossed the lawn, and as his eyes rested upon them the Colonel smiled. Then he rose and went to the window, to get another glimpse of his daughter and Maurice.

' I told you she is not well,' he said, turning to his friend, ' and to-day I have become satisfied that it is not mere fancy on my part. I have watched her closely during the last two years, and although she has shown herself most eager to do everything that

would make me happy, and has appeared to be happy and contented herself, there have been times when the idea has been forced upon me that there is something on her mind about which she will not speak to me.'

'Have you told her so?'

'Not yet,' he replied, as if speaking to himself whilst he slowly paced the floor, head bowed and hands clasped behind him. 'What occurred to me is this: that in striving to do what I believe to be best for her, I have done her an injury in making the change in her life so sudden and complete.'

'The change was necessary, and you have not deprived her of any friends.'

'No, I have not deprived her of her friends, but I have separated her from them.'

'But only for a time, and she knows that you would not put any needless restriction upon her seeing them.'

'Yes, any of the friends I know; but there may be somebody about whom I know nothing yet, and whose introduction she may fear would not be pleasing to me. Do you understand?'

Mr. Calthorpe did understand, and was startled into a new train of reflection. Deeply as he had considered the probabilities of the young heiress being speedily captured by some knight of more daring heart than his son, it had never before occurred to him that she might be already a captive. Now that the idea was suggested, it appeared to him only too probable: it would account, as nothing else in her early training would, for the ease with which she bore and repelled the assaults of many wooers.

'What has made you think of this?'

'Her vehemence in assuring me to-day that she would never marry: her strange fits of depression, followed by wild moods of excitement, such as she was in this evening. You thought her mirth was the natural result of good health and an easy mind. To me it was all forced—so plainly forced, that I am surprised you did not observe it.'

'I thought we formed a very pleasant family party, and was delighted with her humorous way of challenging Maurice to dare the evening dews by accompanying her to the bungalow in search of something she had left there. I cannot imagine what reason she could have for attempting to deceive you regarding her state of health or mind.'

'Because you do not feel as I do what you said yourself just now—that she is devoted to me. She is so glad to be with me, she thinks that I have done so much for her, and that there has been so much sorrow in my life already, that she must sacrifice

every inclination of her own if it should cause me the least uneasiness. Poor child, it was her mother's way, and unfortunately I did not understand it until too late.'

'But you may be mistaken,' suggested Mr. Calthorpe feebly, for he could not find much assurance in the suggestion himself.

'Possibly—I hope so; but I am disturbed by old memories. Every look and every laugh or smile makes me think of her mother on the last day we were together. She was like what Mabel was to-night, perfectly free from care apparently. I was blindly happy, and had no suspicion that she was making it a merry day because it was to be our last one together. So it proved; but if she had lived! Well, there is no use speculating upon what might have been, except when it helps us to direct what may be.'

'If it should happen that your surmise is correct, and that Mabel has a lover of whom she thinks you would not approve—what will you do?'

Mr. Calthorpe put the question cautiously; but notwithstanding his own selfish interest in the answer, there was a kindly element of interest on his friend's account also.

'Try to find out what the man was, and, if he were an honest fellow, give her to him with my blessing.'

'What! without consideration as to his position—education—prospects!'

'Without considering anything beyond the question whether or not he would make her happy.'

'But, my dear Cuthbert, this would not be just even to her. She does not—'

'There!' interrupted the Colonel, smiling at his friend's look of astonishment and alarm; 'I know all the wise counsel you would give me, and thank you for it the more heartily that it is still unspoken. I shall use all necessary prudence to secure my object—that is, I shall be careful that she does not fall into the hands of a scamp. But I must not forget that before my return to England she had time to form ties which may be more tender even than those which bind her to me. I own a weak sense of regret in thinking that it can be so, but I must teach myself to think of it as one of the unavoidable results of our separation, and to become resigned to it. I should like to hold the first place in her heart, but that is impossible.'

'Still, her duty to you will enable her to feel that whatever you decide is for her benefit.'

'I shall accept nothing from her sense of duty.' This was said very quietly, but very firmly. The man seemed to be calmly recognising the inevitable fact that there was something he longed for and could never hope to possess. 'What I may request her to do

she must consent to do because she sees herself it is right for herself, and not because it is my wish and her duty to obey. She is a curious girl, and not one to be read at a glance. On the score of duty she would do anything, however distasteful ; to give me pleasure she would submit to any martyrdom, and try to look cheerful under it. That is why I hesitate to press her for an explanation. Perhaps it is wrong : we often cause pain to others in our anxiety to spare them.'

'The matter is of such a serious nature that the sooner you speak the better.'

'I am not sure of that : time and separation settle these affairs without assistance. If she stands that test, I shall know it is her fate that claims her, and act accordingly.'

He looked again from the window. The trees were fusing into black masses against the deepening sky and the stars were becoming prominent.

'Have you never formed any project of your own as to her future ?'

'Of course, several projects ; and one of them was recalled to me a few minutes ago when I saw her passing with Maurice. I should have been well pleased if he had won her.'

'I have thought of that too,' ejaculated Mr. Calthorpe warmly. Then, checking his enthusiasm, and assuming the air of a man who, whilst condescending to make a trifling admission of weakness, is sustained by the consciousness that his motives are above suspicion—' You are of course well acquainted with his circumstances ; but he has talents, and I believe will make a place for himself in the world.'

'I have considered all that, and so have you, Calthorpe—as was natural in us both, seeing them so much together. I like Maurice, and sometimes I have thought that she also had a particular regard for him.'

'She shows him some favour, I think ; and I have frequently meditated having a chat with you on the subject. But it always seemed to me best not to interfere. Knowing your penetration, I had no doubt that you would not permit matters to go too far if the probable result should be distasteful to you.'

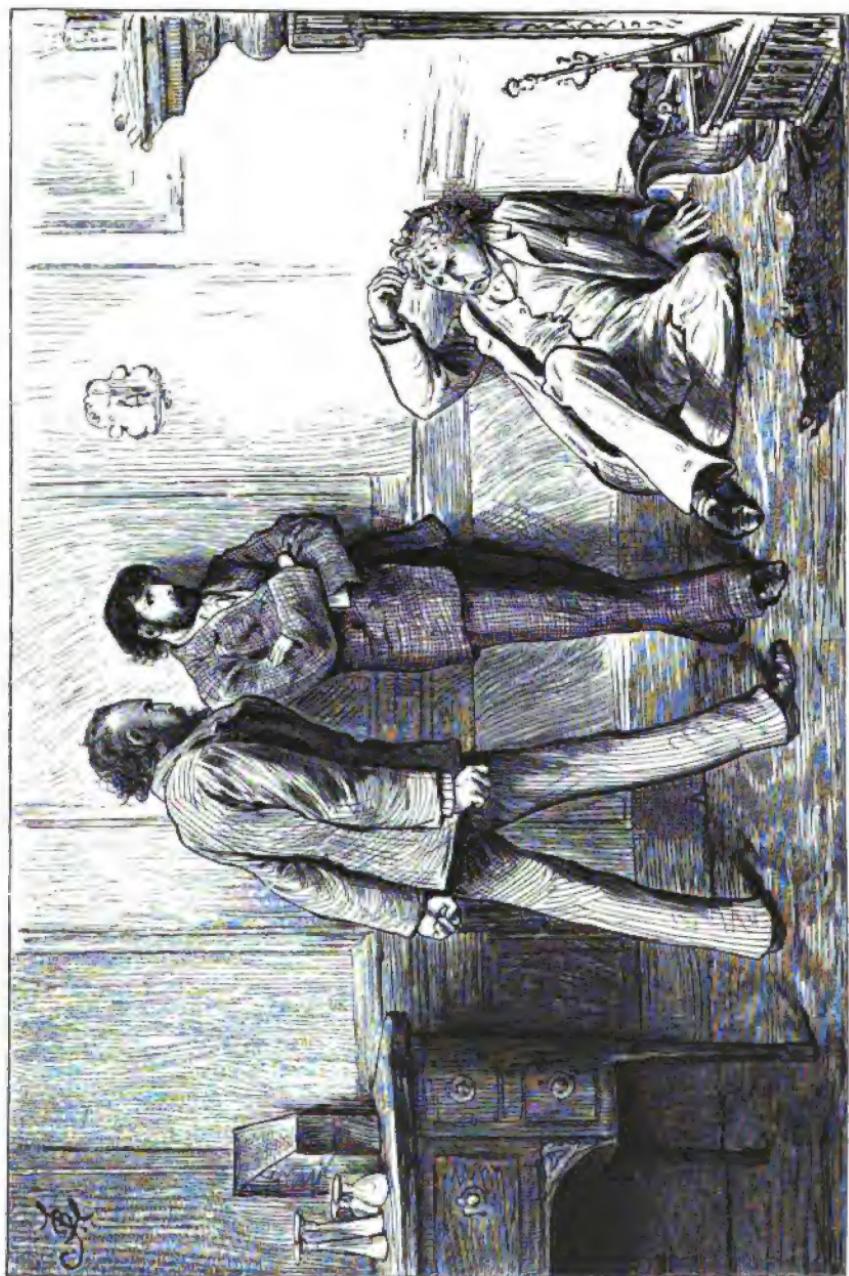
'You now know that it would be the opposite. However, there is little hope of its coming about.'

'I would not give up hope until she confesses that she has some other attachment ; and you can discover that without disturbing her much. I need not say how gratifying it would be to me if Hollyford and Calthorpe were united ; and since we are agreed, I see no reason why they should not be.'

Mr. Calthorpe was determined that they should agree.

(To be continued.)

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'George eyed his assailant with watchful tremor.'

'George eyed his assailant with watchful tremor.'

B E L G R A V I A

OCTOBER 1881.

Joseph's Coat.

BY DAVID CHRISTIE MURRAY.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

IT was true enough to Dinah's ears and heart, and only failed of truth in not being harsh enough. Yes, he had a right to reproach her. If she had not been wicked he would never have been tempted, and she saddled herself with the weight of his misdoings.

As for George, he had been surprised into candour, and he had time to be sorry for it before either of them spoke again. It would be very foolish to kill the fowl of the golden eggs before a single golden egg was laid. And apart from that, he was a criminal himself, and knew that it was proper for him to be lowly in demeanour. If you will look at it, the young man's position was embarrassing. Dinah could scarcely expect to have the truth thrown at her in this rough-and-ready way, and yet she could scarcely expect that George would throw himself at once into her arms, and accept her proclamation of relationship with filial rapture.

I suppose I have told enough of this young man's story to establish pretty clearly the fact that he was—in King Solomon's sense, at least—a fool. But he was clear-headed enough to comprehend the situation by a single motion of the mind, a motion swift and complex. Intellect and wisdom are no synonyms, and the lad had brains enough. He held good cards. How many tricks could he carry?

Dinah was crying passionately at his righteous rebuke, and was struggling passionately to repress her tears. George took time to think.

'I didn't know, my darlin,' she sobbed at last. 'It was my
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ignorance as did it. I wouldn't ha' robbed you of a farthin' o' your rights, no, not to be Queen of England, if I'd only known.'

'I beg your pardon for having spoken so,' said George in answer. So keen a young man could not fail to see that as long as Dinah lived, she must hold the purse-strings.

'I've brought a bit o' money with me now, dear,' said the tearful mother; 'as much as I could get father to let me have. But you'll be able to do on it for a bit, an' I must get you some more.'

She drew out her little purse and emptied it, and the young man accepted the gift with as good a grace as he could summon. It would not do to show too much impatience at first, though the idea of offering the rightful heir to a quarter of a million an advance so miserably inadequate was preposterous enough to have made any man angry. He said 'Thank you,' and stood with the money in one hand and his mother's certificate of marriage in the other. A little sense of shamefacedness touched him. The action of pocketing the gift bade fair to interfere with his martyrdom.

As he stood thus looking downward, a little sick from late privation, later excess, and the emotion of the last hour, his eyes fell upon the written words 'Joseph Bushell.' A new sensation sent a tide of crimson to his face, both hands went suddenly up to hide it, and he groaned and actually cowered. For like a flash of lightning there crossed him for the first time the memory of the insane and pretentious lies he had told his father in America. And with that curdling remembrance came the fear that his father would seek out his mother, and would be brought face to face with *him*. That thought, I am rejoiced to believe, could have been nothing less than horrible. It was certain in the cowering criminal's mind that Cheston would long since have exploded the pretence, and Joseph Bushell would probably be looking somewhat eagerly for the man who had deceived him. Now George could see why the middle-aged stranger in the New York hotel had enquired after Dinah Banks and had played about his memories of the Saracen. Now he could see why that supreme old villain George Bushell had written to say that Dinah had married, and he could see too why his father had resolved on returning to England after so long an exile. Everything was clear as noonday, and nothing was clearer than this—that in spite of the wrongs that had been done him by his mother, he was not a martyr to his father's eyes, or likely to look like one. And—terrible fancy! only too probably to be realised—would not his father claim his own from George Bushell the elder; and would not he, George Bushell

the younger, be left scornfully and contemptuously in the cold as payment for the poor fraud he had practised? It was no wonder, when all this rushed upon him in one sickening torrent of dismay and shame, that he blushed and hid his face and groaned.

To Dinah the whole thing looked like repentance, and more than ever her motherly tender self-accusing heart yearned over the scamp before her, and she threw her arms about him and wept above him, with tears of agony and holy joy, and covered with hungry kisses the hands that hid his face.

'Try to be good, my dear. Try to be sorry, an' God'll forgive you, my poor sufferin' child. That's right, my darlin'! Cry a bit. It'll ease your heart, my poor dear darlin' George.'

And clinging to him still, she began to pray in broken murmurs for forgiveness for herself and him; and holy heroism and base vice ashamed mingled their tears together.

Whatever joy the angels feel over a sinner turned from the evil of his ways was hers in that moment, and it atoned for much. There was no thought in her mind that the world owed her an atonement, and so, the blessing coming as a gift, and not claimed as a desert, was multiplied a thousand times in sweetness. It is more blessed to give than to receive. She gave forgiveness.

Dinah was safe anyhow, even if the newly discovered father should appear again and intervene. So ran the rascal's thoughts. It was his part now to crook the pregnant hinges of the knee where thirst might follow fawning. It was not easy to be affectionate to Dinah all at once, even though she had proclaimed herself his mother, and not his sister. But it was little trouble to receive her caresses, since the mere endurance of them bade fair to be profitable.

What with hope and fear and rage and wonder and the sickness of privation and excess, he was in a condition pitiable to behold. Dinah, feeding her life-long hunger upon her own avowal of motherhood, translated penitence into him and affection, and all worthy shame and trembling honest hopes, and loved him for the attributes her own fancy gave him. In his mind, the first shock of remembrance being over, there remained a sensation of singular discomfort, which was yet not without an element of relief. If he had made an enemy, he had a friend, and it was likely that the forgery alone would have been enough to disgust his father. Dinah would help him to get abroad again, perhaps, before the much-deceived father could get hold of him. Some of the yarns the San Francisco host had told of his own past life had dealt with rough-and-tumble fighting here and there, and Joseph Bushell, though he had made no boast of the part he had taken in

such enforced frays as he had mentioned, had worn a look whilst he spoke of them which seemed to betoken a certain joy in battle. He was a big broad-shouldered fellow, and could probably have broken young George across his knee like a dry stick. George confessed within himself that he had given provocation, and in case of his father's appearance on the scene he was prepared to run and trust to Dinah's generosity for supplies.

' You'd best stay in the same place for a bit, my dear,' said his mother, wiping her eyes, and speaking still with a sobbing catch in her voice, ' an' I'll get more money an' send it to you. I don't know what father'll say when he knows, an' I doubt he'll be hard at first.'

George answered nothing, but took advantage of his search for a pocket-handkerchief to slip her gift into his pocket, and, with his eyes hidden, stretched forth the copy of the marriage certificate towards his mother. She took it from him and folded it, and at that moment the noise of a horse's feet disturbed them both. They turned towards the town, walking slowly, and a horseman passed them without notice. Even so slight an incident helped to restore their self-possession, and Dinah a minute later kissed him tenderly and bade him good-bye for the time being. He returned her caress for the first time since he had been a mere lad, and the mother's heart stored up that mercenary kiss and counted it in his favour. She dropped her veil and walked away without looking back again, and George strolled about the lanes to wear off the traces of his discomposure before returning to the town. Apart from his father, his troubles at last seemed over, but there was enough of doubt in the case to keep his heart in a continual flutter.

Now, being ignorant of John Keen's change of residence, our young rascal had addressed his letter to the old home town, and the postmaster there had forwarded it, so that on the day of Dinah's encounter with her son the lawyer had received the unexpected and astounding news of the lost prisoner's presence in England. With the letter in his pocket-book, he took train for the midland capital, and there found Joseph Bushell at his hotel in mournful consultation with Cheston.

' Read that, Mr. Bushell,' he said, laying down the epistle before him.

' What is it ? ' asked Joe, taking it up. ' Hillo ! ' he exclaimed, as his eye fell upon the superscription, ' this is uncommonly like the fist of that *soi-disant* brother of yours, Cheston.'

'Eh?' cried the Baronet. 'Nonsense! You don't say so! What's he got to say for himself?'

'The letter is from your son, Mr. Bushell,' said John Keen gravely. 'I received it to-day. To-morrow he will call at the Post-office at Borton for an answer. Before answering it I consult you. Pray read it.'

Joe read it, and his face grew white. With bent head and gaze fixed upon the floor, he pushed it across to Cheston.

'What do you make of it?' he asked after a pause.

'I'll tell you what I make of it,' shouted Cheston, rising and striking the table with a heavy hand. 'That thundering old rascal of an uncle of yours never gave the lad a penny after all, but got him free and turned him loose. Gave him the slip, the old fox, I'll bet a thousand pounds!'

'We shall see,' Joe answered, still staring at the floor. After a while he lifted his pale face and looked at Keen. 'Will you go to Borton with me to meet him?'

'Most willingly,' said John.

'Will you start now?—by the next train?'

'Certainly.'

'I am using you very cavalierly, old friend,' said Joe with a pitiable forced smile at Cheston; 'asking you here to dinner and then running away from you in this fashion.'

'You don't want an army with you,' returned Cheston, 'or I'd volunteer. I wish you success; and if I can do anything for you here or anywhere, command me.'

'No,' Joe answered. 'I don't think you can do anything.'

It was plain that his thoughts were far away from his speech, and Cheston, taking Joe's right hand in both his own, shook it with great heartiness, and left his old friend and the young lawyer to themselves.

'I believe, Mr. Keen,' said Joe miserably enough, 'that the writer of this letter is the young man I met in America—the man who pretended to be Cheston's brother. The handwritings are alike, and the young fellow I met was intimately acquainted with the district, and knew all the people.'

'I suppose that if you saw a photograph you would know?' said John.

'Certainly,' Joe returned.

'If you will go on to Borton,' John continued, 'I will stop at Wrethedale, and join you an hour or two later, bringing a photograph with me. You don't know the town, I suppose?'

'No,' said Joe. 'I was never there in my life.'

'You had better put up at the Hare and Hounds in Wedge

Street,' said John. 'A very quiet quaint old house, not the best in the town, but opposite the Post-office and convenient for our purpose. I will join you there.'

Joe had little heart for converse outside the theme that filled his mind, and but little heart indeed to speak of that more than seemed needful. So the journey was made quietly, and from the little station at Wrethedale Joe travelled on alone. He went to the house to which he had been directed, carrying his own portmanteau, and asked for a bedroom. The rosy chambermaid led him up a flight of old oak steps, and along a corridor full of traps in the way of descending and ascending stairs, and finally landed him in a queer three-cornered room with an outlook on a garden.

'Anything to eat, sir?' asked the rosy chambermaid.

'Not yet,' said the guest; and being left alone, he opened the window, lit a cigar, and began to smoke sadly. He had kept his son's letter to John Keen, and he now read it over and over again. It was terrible to think that the crime and folly which had brought his son to the pass therein described were chiefly traceable to him, and yet he could scarce do otherwise than think so. It was natural in him to accuse himself for all. 'I am destitute,' so he read; 'my feet are bare, my clothes in rags . . . I am compelled to move about from place to place to get workhouse shelter and a casual tramp's poor fare.' How was Joe to say that his son had deserved to suffer in this way? Give everybody his deserts, and would *he* escape whipping?

He sat thinking thus, and bearing a heavy punishment for the misdoing of his youth, until John Keen rejoined him.

'Have you brought the photograph?' Joe asked, recognising John in the darkness.

'Yes. Wait a minute whilst I light a candle. Is that the man?'

That was the man, sure enough. Not an ill-looking man either, by any means. A young man who held his head aloft rather haughtily, and who imposed upon the beholder with a certain pretence of being a great deal handsomer than he really was, as is the way with some people.

'Yes,' said Joe. 'This is the man who called himself George Cheston when I met him in the States.'

'It is my old schoolfellow and companion George Banks,' said John; 'your son, George Bushell.'

The unhappy father nodded and set down the photograph. 'He mustn't see me in the morning until you have him safely,' he said after a long pause. 'He might want to run away from me again. He has been a bad lot, Mr. Keen, but I must do the

best I can with him. I'll fasten a weekly allowance on him in such a way that he can't forestall it, and that will keep him honest —in money matters.'

' You'll have some dinner, Mr. Bushell ? ' asked John.

' Yes,' said Joe: ' You'd better order it. Have you got a room ? '

' Not yet,' John answered, pulling at the bell. ' I'll see about one now.'

The rosy chambermaid appearing, the young lawyer went away with her to see after his room and order dinner, and Joe smoked on by the light of his solitary candle, staring at the photograph, and failing to read in it any sign of the wickedness its original had shown. After a lapse of half an hour or so, John returned and found him thus employed.

' Dinner is ready,' said he. ' Shall we go down ? '

Joe assented, and John led the way. The coffee-room was a good-sized oblong chamber panelled with old oak and dimly illuminated by a dozen candles. One guest was there before them, a young man dressed in a cheap-looking tweed suit which fitted him none too well. He was standing at the fire regarding a sporting print above the mantelpiece, and his back was turned to the new-comers. Without moving his head he addressed the waitress, who in clean white apron and cap was going round the table, touching the knives and forks.

' I say,' said the young man in the tweed suit, ' bring me another bottle of that claret, and take the chill off it this time, will you ? You can take it into the billiard-room, and you can let me have one or two of your best cigars at the same time.'

There was nothing very amazing in the speech just cited, but at the very first words of it the new-comers started and stared with wondering eyes upon each other.

' Your dinner, gentlemen,' said the neat waitress.

Joe nodded, and she bustled from the room.

' Stand by the door,' Joe whispered, and John with a backward step felt for the key and turned it in the lock.

Joe walked swiftly up the room, and at the very second when the young man in the tweed suit turned round at the noise of the shooting bolt, he laid a hand like a vice upon each arm, and said, ' So, Mr. Cheston ! '

The merest shadow of an attempt to free himself showed the young man that flight was out of the question. But if force could not avail him, was it not possible that finesse might serve ? *Perhaps* Joseph Bushell might be 'bluffed' into the belief that he had been led away by an astonishing likeness.

'Sir,' he returned therefore, with an indignant drawing up of his figure, 'you have the advantage of me.'

'George, my lad,' said Joe grimly, 'if you lie to me, or attempt to lie to me, again, I'll break every bone in your body.'

Since he had known of a son's existence he had pictured many meetings with him, but none like this.

'So, you're destitute, are you?' Joe went on; 'your feet are bare—your clothes in rags. You move about from place to place to get workhouse shelter and a casual tramp's poor fare! Whom have you robbed now? Who is your last quarry? Keen,' he cried with an almost hysterical bitterness, 'look at this fellow!—this forger and impostor and liar, who knows neither of us. Shouldn't I be a happy man to come home after six-and-twenty years of exile and find a son like this!'

And having said this, he was moved by an impulse which I will not characterise. He swung the impostor round and kicked him into a corner of the room, where he lay in a heap, guarding his head with his arms; and Joe towered over him with a rage amounting to pure anguish in his heart.

'If I had met this hound in trouble—' he began—and there his own accusing conscience staggered him so that he had nothing more to say, but he ground his teeth and clenched his hands in a miserable compound of remorse and anger. George gathered himself into smaller compass in his corner, and eyed his assailant with watchful tremor. John put himself between assailant and assailed, but did it in a casual and unostentatious way. 'If I had met him in trouble—' Joe began again; 'if I had seen him as I expected to see him—I could have had some kindness for him, and some forgiveness for him.' He made a motion of despair and misery, and John, not reading it rightly, gave a brisk step forward. 'I shan't hit him again,' cried Joe, observing this sign. 'Stand up, you melancholy dog, stand up!'

The melancholy dog, with furtive fear in his eyes, stood up.

'Now,' said his father, 'if I find you trying to deceive me again, I'll hand you over to the police for the trick you played me in the States, and thrash you within an inch of your life before I do it. Will you oblige me, Mr. Keen, by unlocking the door? There is some one knocking at it. Sit down, sir.'

George, with his fears still furtively peeping from his eyes, sat down, and John unlocked the door. The neat maid, a trifle scared, looked round and announced that the claret was in the billiard-room.

'The gentleman is engaged for the present,' said John blandly. 'Will you kindly bring it here?'

The girl obeyed, and during her brief absence not a word was spoken. She looked from one to the other when she brought in the wine, and reminded John that the soup was cooling.

'Thank you,' said John, still bland and suave. 'We are engaged just now. We have business with this gentleman. You can send up the dinner when I ring for it. In the meantime, let us have this room to ourselves.'

The girl disappeared, and John locked the door again, but pausing with the key in his hand, he asked,

'Would you like to be alone, Mr. Bushell?'

'No,' Joe answered. 'Come here. Now, sir,' turning upon George, 'I am going to have the truth out of you by hook or by crook. What brings you here? What have you been doing since you gave me the slip at Liverpool?'

George showed no disposition to begin, but at a threatening movement on the questioner's part he opened his narrative.

'I went to Newcastle-on-Tyne,' he said, 'and tried to get employment. But everybody wanted a certificate of character, and I couldn't give one. Then I went to Durham, and there it was the same. So I had to sell my things.'

'Mine!' thought Joe, remembering the stolen portmanteau, but he said nothing.

'And I didn't know where my people were,' pursued the criminal, 'and I had to wander about the country. I wrote at last to Mr. Keen when I was nearly dying, but last night I got to a place called Wrethedale, about five-and-twenty miles from here, and—'

There he began to weep again.

'Well?' said Joe sternly.

'I met a lady,' piped the weeping George, 'a lady I used to know before—' He drew forth a pink-edged cheap handkerchief and sobbed into it. 'Mr. Keen knows her. She gave me nearly four pounds, and I bought some clothes. I was in rags,' he protested, 'I was really. And I was nearly dying. Mr. Keen can ask her if I wasn't.'

'You have had a pretty good dinner,' said Joe, glancing at the débris on the table, 'and you can afford your two bottles of claret to it. And a château wine, as I'm alive!' he cried, laying a hand on the mourning George's second bottle. 'Now, you didn't come here from Wrethedale and buy those clothes, and pay a day's hotel bill on this scale, out of nearly four pounds. Where did you get the rest of the money from?'

No answer.

'Or are you going to rob the hotel people?'

'No,' cried George. 'I have money to pay them. Dinah has been here to-day.' This was addressed to John Keen, and left both his hearers under the impression that the scamp was still ignorant of his parentage. But Joe took that bull by the horns, resolved to have no more mysteries or misunderstandings than it seemed unavoidable to leave.

'Do you know that you are related to me?' he asked, sickening at the question even as he put it.

'Yes,' said the other, still sobbing into the cheap handkerchief.

'Do you know the nature of the relationship?' Joe asked again.

'Yes,' snuffled George under his breath.

'Who told you?' Joe demanded.

'Dinah told me,' said George, avoiding his father's eye and directing the answer to John Keen.

'Did she tell you of her own relationship to you?'

'Yes.'

'When did she tell you these things?'

'This morning.'

'You are my son,' said Joe—'God help me, and forgive me!—and I will deal by you as best I can—as well as you will let me. Let me see signs of amendment in you, or it will not be well for you. I shall not be ready to read the signs too easily, and you shall not look for a life of idleness and good-for-nothing luxury at my hands. I have left my duty undone, and I owe many atonements even to you.' It cost him a good deal to confess as much, but he was bent on doing his duty now, and this seemed part of it. 'But you are one who will need a tight hand, and you shall have it. And now, you can go to your room. I have no fear of your running away, for you are not too proud a dog to eat dirty puddings, and you see your way already to getting a little money out of me when you can work up a fit of penitence.'

Under these scathing words George did begin to feel a little cur-like, and he had to admit that he had done something to deserve them. But even here appearances were wretchedly against him, and he felt it as a keen misfortune that he should have been rehabilitated before his newly discovered father chanced upon him. A single day of luxury was dearly purchased at the price he had paid for it.

He crept from the room with his head hanging, and when he reached his own chamber he began to cast about in his mind for the best and wisest course to adopt with this muscular and outspoken father. Would it pay to run away to begin with, refusing his aid on the ground that he was unworthy to receive it, and so

wording a penitent letter that it might indicate a clue to his whereabouts, without seeming to do so? He even began to sketch the half-projected letter in his mind. He recalled a sentence from the parable of the Prodigal Son which bade fair to come in with good effect. He would be quite heart-brokenly penitent, and yet display a lingering touch of magnanimity. It would look a little worthier in him to admit his unworthiness. And you must understand that in the nature of this young man—though all this was as clearly outlined in intention as I have made it seem—it was not altogether hollow and insincere. While he wept for shame and humiliation, he was thinking that his weeping at all was a manly sign in him, and he knew the while that if he wrote that letter he would let new tears fall on it, and he looked for a certain effect that way. Yet, even for him, penitence meant something more than the misery of being detected. Of course a man who really knew how to repent could never have been guilty of young George's particular crimes. A man who has the power to repent nobly may sin much, but hardly in that way. No lion, however degenerate, takes to weaving spider's webs. George's penitence was like his offences—as yours and mine are.

As he sat, half resolving in his uncourageous soul to do this thing and seem a little better than he was in his own eyes and his father's, a tap came to the door and John Keen entered.

'Your father has deputed me to speak to you about a matter of importance,' said John. 'He wishes you distinctly to understand that any hopes of his assistance you may entertain will depend upon your obedience in this matter. Your mother is not yet aware of his presence in England. She does not even know that he is still alive, and until he can see his way more clearly than he can at present he desires that she shall hear nothing of him. I suppose I may tell him that you respect his wish? You will see your mother again in a little time. Will you undertake—remembering what hangs upon it—to drop no hint of your father's presence in England—to drop no hint of your having ever seen him anywhere?'

'Yes,' said George; 'I promise faithfully. Keen,' he added, rising and breaking into tears anew,—'you won't believe that I wrote you that letter and pretended to be starving when I wasn't. I give you my word of honour it was true.'

'I see no reason to doubt you,' said John, somewhat coldly. He could hardly fail to remember that this good young man had quarrelled with him on the ground that he was not moral enough for the good young man to know him any longer. 'I may take your promise?'

'Yes,' said George, and the messenger turned to leave. 'Keen,' cried the criminal, 'I know I've acted like a blackguard, but I'm not so bad as people think me. I never meant to stick to that money, and I won enough on Erebus to put it back. And I haven't—I haven't—I haven't a friend in the world!'

And so, once more, the young man mistook self-pity for repentance.

CHAPTER XXIX.

JOE left Borton next morning, but before he did so he had another interview with his son.

'Understand,' said Joe, 'that I mean to do my best by you. And understand that the best I can do for you seems to me to be to set your nose to the grindstone and keep it there. Mr. Keen will find you employment, and everything you hope from me will depend upon the way in which you conduct yourself. You will have the manliness to tell your mother that you need no further help from her, and that you are resolved to work out by yourself an atonement for your own misdeeds. If you accept one penny-piece from her, you forfeit all claim on me. Try to be a man,' said Joe with a shaky voice. 'Try to be honest. And so, good-bye, sir. When I can shake hands with you without feeling soiled by it, I will.'

Having made arrangements with the lawyer for the furtherance of his ideas concerning young George, Joe started back for his hotel, and on his lonely journey he set himself to unravel the tangled strands of the net which held him. He had made up his mind not to reveal himself to Dinah, and, being all along in a mood to do penance, he held hard to his resolve—held the harder for his own strong inclination to go against it. There was an intense longing in his heart to comfort her, and there was a dreadful fear that the proclamation of himself would but bring a new sorrow to her. He put by that trying problem for the time, as he had done before, not yet being able to solve it. And then he set to work to think about Uncle George. It was beyond doubt that Uncle George had been a rascal; but then, who was Joe Bushell that he should judge anybody, or be severe beyond necessity even with so bad an old man as his benevolent relative had proved?

'Why should one scoundrel venture to be hard upon another?' Joe asked himself. 'He's been a bad lot, but so have I.'

He would have justice and no more. Even if old George got better, it was impossible that he should fight the case: there were too many dangers in it. And if he died, there would be an end of everything so far as he was concerned, for Dinah could claim the money. Yet there would be a necessity for exposure then, and

Dinah had kept her secret so long and so closely that even for her child's sake Joe could see that it would be hard to proclaim it to the world. There was one thing which seemed possible for the returned exile to do. If old George should recover the use of his intellect, though only for a day, Joe had power enough over him to compel him in any way he chose. He could compel him to make surrender to Dinah and to keep his secret. Such a hold as Joe had upon him no man could afford to disregard or defy. And out of this reflection arose a plan, and out of this plan arose in turn the incidents which closed the romance of Joe's story.

Once arrived in Birmingham, he had a horse saddled and rode over to his old chum Cheston.

'Cheston,' he broke out at once on meeting him, 'I want to be constantly in the neighbourhood of my Uncle George. I want to be the first to know of his getting better; and if he needs any persuasion when the time comes, I want to be on the spot to give it.'

'He'll want no persuasion,' said Cheston. 'The sword hangs by a hair, and he'll be precious hasty in getting from under it.'

'He might recover his senses, and then die in a day or two, before anything was done,' urged Joe. 'Then there would be a disputed will, and no end to the publicity of the case.'

'The doctor thinks that he'll live to be moderately strong again,' said Cheston.

'Leave me to my own plan,' said Joe with something of his youthful obstinacy. 'I want to watch him, I want to be near him to lend a helping hand to my wife's case if it should be needed. And I want you to give me a berth of some sort.'

'Eh?' said the Baronet.

'I don't want a salary,' said Joe, misunderstanding the cause of his friend's astonishment; 'I want something to do, just to prevent my being in the neighbourhood from looking odd. My name is Jones,' he went on with a faint unmirthful grin. 'It runs in the family to take aliases. I am an *employé* of Sir Sydney Cheston's. I do anything which allows me to live in the parish unnoticed and unobserved. Nobody will know me. Give me my way, Cheston. And I'll tell you what it is besides. I want to see the old place and some of the old faces, if there are any left. I'm number sixteen at the hotel. There's no name on my luggage. Not a soul knows me except yourself and young Keen and that wretched boy of mine. Let me have my way.'

'Well,' said the Baronet, half laughing and half puzzled, 'what can you do? Do you know anything about mines? You used to, but things are changed a good deal, and it's a long time ago.'

'I worked in a coal-mine in the Dominion,' said Joe; 'but that's twenty years since.'

'You could do a little fancy inspecting, perhaps. Or, let me see. Bowker is a reliable man, and young Gavan broke his leg last week. Yes, that'll do. Gavan was managing man at a new pit of mine called "The Buzzard." I don't know why they call it so, so don't ask me. Gavan broke his leg, and Bowker, his subordinate, has been carrying on the work. Now, you might take Gavan's place. Leave Bowker alone pretty much, you know, and take his advice about things. He's a thoroughly practical man, one of the old rough sort, but a very decent fellow.'

'All right,' said Joe; 'I'll undertake to be worth what I draw from you, and no more. Can you send my horse back and drive me over?'

'What!' cried Cheston with a merry laugh. 'Drive a mere mine-manager! Me! Well, I don't mind giving you a lift. I'll order the dog-cart.'

Every yard they drove had at one time been familiar to young Joe Bushell, and middle-aged Joe Bushell remembered the way well. After a mile or two they passed the very field in which young Joe had first kissed Dinah and told her how fond of her he was. Poor Dinah! The kiss had been a betrayal, though he had not meant it so. A mile or two later came George Bushell's house, and a little farther on the Saracen, all stuccoed and bedizened with plate glass and gilt lettering. Then before long the dog-cart turned into a lumpy lane and began to jolt and roll in a threatening manner, and in a while, rounding an artificial hill of mine refuse, they came in sight of the tall stack of the Buzzard and the raw red brick-work of the Buzzard's offices.

A miner came forward to hold the Baronet's horse.

'This way, Mr. Jones, if you please,' cried Cheston with a broad grin. 'Ah! that's you, Mr. Bowker! I wish to speak to you. Come into the offices.'

Joe took a look at Mr. Bowker, and gave a little start beholding him. Mr. Bowker, in spite of the years which intervened between the present and Joe's knowledge of him, was still recognisable as one who had done odd work for Joe's father in his youth. Mr. Bowker, for his part, looked at Joe, but with no unusual regard.

'Mr. Bowker,' said Sir Sidney, taking a seat on a rough-hewn stool in the office, 'this is Mr. Jones, who will take Gavan's place for the time being.'

'Very well, sir,' said Mr. Bowker, regarding the new-comer with no particular favour.

'I have given him instructions,' said Sir Sydney with a preter-

natural gravity, belied by a twinkle in his eye as he looked at Joe, ‘not to disturb any arrangements on which you may have acted up to this time, and I hope you’ll get on well together.’

‘I hope so tew,’ returned Mr. Bowker, with an unfavouring glance at Joe’s watch-chain and his well-cut though unassuming garments of dark tweed.

‘You’ll want lodgings, Mr. Jones,’ said Cheston, with his eyes twinkling and his face a mask of gravity.

‘Yes, I suppose so,’ said Joe.

Mr. Bowker turned sheer round and stared at him. Then he turned again and caught the twinkle in the Baronet’s eye.

‘Your naäm’s no more Jones than mine is,’ he cried. ‘Why, it’s young master Joseph! Lord love me! I ought to ha’ knowed you in a glawnce, like. Why, bless my soul! I bin glad to see thee. But when I heerd thee spake I knowed thee. Shaäk honds, ode mon, shaäk honds!’

Joe shook hands heartily, but he turned a moment later to Cheston, and looked at him with a somewhat rueful smile.

‘So much for my plot!’ he said. ‘William,’ he added, turning to the beaming Mr. Bowker, ‘I didn’t expect you to know me.’

‘Lord love thee!’ said William, ‘I should ha’ knowed thee anywhere!’

‘So I said, Bushell,’ cried the Baronet. ‘So I said.’

‘I don’t want it to be known that I’m back again,’ said Joe. Mr. Bowker’s eyes opened wide at this, but he said nothing. ‘My uncle is very ill, as I dare say you know,’ he continued, ‘and I don’t want him to know that I am here at present.’

‘I see,’ said William briskly. ‘Th’ ode fox has had your feyther’s money, an’ now he’ll ha’ to turn it up, I reckon. Hewray!’

‘You seem to bear him no good will?’ said Joe.

‘Not me! Why, he gi’en me the sack at a minute’s notice,’ said William; ‘an’ all for tekin the part of a woman as was i’ trouble, as he was a-blackguardin’. You remember her?—Miss Banks. Her brother was took up for forgin’ ode Bushell’s naäm, an’ her went to him to beg him off, and he miscalled her all o’er the plaäs. An’ I ups an’ spakes to him. “Shut up!” I says. “Y’ode Rip,” I says, “wheer’s your bowells?” An’ he turns o’ me, an’ he says, “Tek a minute’s notice,” he says, “an’ leave my empl’y,” he says. Oh, he’s a bitter hard un, he is. Well, send I may live! I bin glad to see thee, Master Joseph, real righteous right-down glad, an’ that’s the trewth.’

In the new handshaking that ensued Joe threw in a little extra pressure for Dinah’s defender.

‘I wanted to stop in the neighbourhood, William,’ he said,

reluctant to abandon his plan. ‘And I didn’t want to be known. Do you think anybody else would know me?’

‘Well, I doubt they would,’ said William reflectively. ‘But theer ain’t a lot o’ th’ ode uns left not now. Not one on ’em works here. Yo’ might live i’ my cottage if yo’re i’ want o’ lodgins’, an’ welcome. An’ yo’ could tek to wearin’ a pair o’ blew glasses. Dr. Hodgetts he’s took to ‘em, an’ I went by wi’out knowin’ him on’y yesterday. They are a real mazin’ disguise—blew glasses.’

‘Well, I won’t try the blue glasses,’ said Joe, ‘but I’ll stop and take my chance.’ There was more in his resolve than he expressed. What if he *were* known, and the general knowledge brought him back to Dinah? He feared; but might he not make her happy after all? Ah! if once she took him back again, he would so surround her with observances of love and tenderness that he would half atone—No, no! that was impossible. But he would try to make her happy for the future—if they came together again. ‘I’ll have no alias, Cheston,’ he cried suddenly. ‘It would look base to be detected under such a disguise. But I’ll stay here and take my chance. Bushell is a common name enough. I can trust you, William?’

‘I shan’t breathe a synnable,’ said staunch William, ‘till you gi’en me leave.’

‘Now Joe, old man,’ said Cheston, with a friendly hand on his shoulder, ‘I call this a step in the right direction.’

‘I hope it will prove so,’ answered Joe.

And so at his own proper cost the returned exile lived in Mr. Bowker’s cottage. He bought coarser tweeds and a billycock hat, and fiddled about the mine, making journeys into the bowels of the earth at times, and holding grave consultations with Mr. Bowker as to the progress of the work in hand. Long years of business habits had left upon him the necessity for occupation, and he began by-and-by to take a real interest in the work. The rapidity with which he revived old knowledge and mastered new impressed Mr. Bowker greatly, but Joe kept his eye upon the real business he had in hand, and was keen after news of old George. He found, in the bar parlour of the Dudley Arms of an evening, a generation who knew him not. Two or three oldsters were there whom he had faintly known in his early days, and when he heard their names he could call them to remembrance, but none of them made any guess as to his identity. He was extremely silent and reserved amongst them, smoking his pipe and sitting behind his ‘Times’ as he listened to their talk. Old George’s illness was a common topic, and old George’s doctor was a nightly guest; so that such news as was to be had he got at without the

risk of questioning. A week or two of immunity from recognition seemed to make him safe.

In the meantime John Keen had found employment at Borton for young George, and sent news that the criminal was buckling-to with a will, and promised all sorts of amendment. What the heir presumptive to a quarter of a million thought of working as a clerk at five-and-thirty shillings a week, and living on that sum, was not to be got at, but it is certain that for the time being he bore it well; and news reached his father that he had strenuously refused Dinah's proffered aid, in accordance with instructions.

After two or three weeks of waiting, there came news of a decisive change in old George's condition, and Joe learned that in the course of a few days it was possible that the old man might be allowed to look at business once again. He sent the news to John Keen, and John came down on the strength of it and saw the doctor, who denied him access to the sick man for the present, but undertook to pave the way for him.

The frustrated schemer had been groping in his mind in a dim and feeble way, and had at length discovered the mental chamber in which, hidden under all manner of rubbish and débris, lay the remembrance of the lawyer's visit, and his own denial of his crime. And when the doctor set before him the fact that Mr. Keen was again in the neighbourhood waiting to see him, the old fellow, with a sort of inward earthquake, recognised the folly and madness of resistance. He had sinned in vain, and his sin had found him out. He had given a hundred pounds to Joseph—that was something. It soothed his heart a little to think of that one generous deed, the only one he could recall; though he tried hard to remind himself of his own virtues as a set-off to the account an offended God certainly held against him. The pangs of affrighted conscience were terrible to him, but these alone might have been fought down. There was no fighting young Keen and the evidence of the sexton, or if there were, he was broken and no longer had the pluck for it.

These miseries retarded recovery, but body and mind obstinately insisted on getting stronger, and he had to see John Keen at last. The old man's skin was of the colour of the film which gathers on stale unbaked bread, and his eyes were fishy and watery. His mouth was drawn down purselike at the corners, and the inner ends of his eyebrows were drawn upwards, so that he wore a mask expressive of feeble misery. John had expected a change in him, but was yet surprised to see him look so wretched.

'I've been a-thinkin' over the news as you give me, Mr. Keen,' he said in quavering tones; 'an' if you prove your case, I'm willin'

to do justice. But five-an'-twenty thousand pound is a large sum to part with on anythin' but good evidence.'

'Mr. Bushell,' said John gravely, 'I beg you not to try to deceive me, or to force me into measures which I should regret.'

'Well, forty thousand's a good round sum,' said old George.

'Pray understand, Mr. Bushell,' said John quietly, 'that we cannot content ourselves with anything less than the restoration of the whole of your brother Joseph's fortune. Let me tell you what we know. I shall tell you nothing I am not in a position to prove. You purposely widened the quarrel between your nephew Joseph and his parents. You withheld from him all knowledge of his father's death, and you wrote to him, when you had held for a year the fortune which belonged to him, saying that his wife had married again, and so prevented his return to England.'

Old George's mouth opened and his fishy eyes widened with a look so ghastly that the lawyer paused. The unbaked pie-crust complexion changed to a deep crimson, and changed again to a dull leaden colour, and for a minute or two John feared that his listener would succumb to the news. He rose and mixed a tumbler of wine and water and held it to the old man's lips. By-and-by the patient recovered, and returned to his former aspect.

'Must I go on and distress you with the memory of these misdeeds?' John asked. 'We know everything. We have been in communication with the governor of the gaol. Your late private secretary is again in England. Why should you bring misery and disgrace upon yourself by resisting us?'

'I bain't a-resistin' anybody,' said old George feebly and miserably. 'I'm willin' to do justice. A hundred thousand pound's a lot o' money, but I'm willin' to do justice.'

'You are not near the amount yet, Mr. Bushell,' John returned. 'The title-deeds of all the landed property of which your brother Joseph died possessed, and the papers relating to his funded properties, are still in existence. When we come to business we shall be able to refresh your memory.'

The wretched defeated old schemer groaned.

'The houses was good for nothin', an' was all sold at a loss,' he protested. 'The money's all mixed up along o' mine. I bain't a-goooin' to be made a pauper on. Mind that, now.'

But this feeble spark of resistance died out when John answered him :

'I am sorry to say, Mr. Bushell, that you have not deserved any merciful consideration at our hands. I shall accept no compromise.'

'Am I a-goooin' to be made a pauper on?' quavered the wretched

old George. ‘Answer me that, Mr. Keen. Am I a-gooin’ to be made a pauper on?’

‘You must be thankful, Mr. Bushell,’ John responded, ‘that we do not take criminal measures against you. Be glad that your wickedness is to be punished so lightly.’

‘My brother Joseph meant to leave a lot of his money to me,’ cried George tremulously. ‘He allays said so, an’ he made a will an’ did it. Am I a-gooin’ to be robbed o’ that?’

‘Mr. Bushell,’ said John, ‘we will take back every penny-piece of which you wrongfully possessed yourself. Thank us, when you come to reason again, that we do no more. We have been merciful to you, and we desire to be merciful still; but so far as your brother Joseph’s fortune is concerned, we shall insist upon strict justice. May I see your lawyer now?’

‘No,’ cried George feebly; ‘I’ll deal with him myself. You come here at twelve to-morrow, an’ I’ll have him here. I bain’t strong enough to do no more talkin’ to-day. I’m tired.’

‘Very good, Mr. Bushell,’ said John. ‘At twelve to-morrow.’

The young lawyer took his way, not without some pity for the broken schemer. He wrote that afternoon two accounts of his interview, despatching one to Joe and the other to Dinah, and on the morrow at midday he presented himself anew at old George’s house. Mr. Packmore, that elderly conveyancer who had once on a time recommended Ethel to John Keen’s services, had not yet arrived, and George was alone.

‘Mr. Keen,’ he said, in a stronger voice than that of yesterday, ‘if I’m a-gooin’ to do justice, it’s fair as I should come off wi’ no disgrace.’

‘That depends upon yourself, Mr. Bushell,’ John answered. ‘It is not necessary for Mr. Packmore to know more than the mere fact, that I can prove Dinah Banks’s marriage to Joseph Bushell.’

But when Mr. Packmore came he turned out to be a very hard conveyancer indeed, and by no means willing to believe that his client was ready to surrender so huge a slice of his great fortune. In his opinion—as up to that time advised—the case ought to be fought, if only for the sake of securing a complete proof. But finding that his client objected most savagely and obstinately to any fight being made, he gave in.

‘Very well, Mr. Bushell,’ he said at last with quiet desperation. ‘I’ll go over to Waston Church as a mere matter of form, anyway, and look at the original entry.’

‘Yo’ do anythin’ of the sort, if you dare!’ cried old George in a half-frenzy.

The elderly lawyer looked at him in amazement, and confided to John Keen his opinion that really Mr. Bushell was not in a fit condition to transact business just at present.

'On our side,' John answered, 'we cannot admit of any delay. Mr. Bushell is fully persuaded of the validity of our claim, and wishes to do justice.'

'It's an odd business,' said the conveyancer, 'and one that I have no stomach for.' They were outside the house by this time. 'You have some hold upon him, Mr. Keen—something I don't know of.'

'Mr. Packmore,' said John, with infinite dryness, 'I am at your service in this matter whenever you choose. In the interest of all parties, I think we had better get it over quickly.'

The two legal gentlemen met again next day, and the elder looked extremely grave.

'Mr. Keen,' he said, 'I *have* been to Waston Church, and there is no certificate of a marriage there between Joseph Bushell and Dinah Banks.'

'You had better communicate that discovery to your client, Mr. Packmore,' said John. 'This is a certified copy of the original register.' He produced the document from his pocket-book and again placed it in the conveyancer's hands.

'Well, the original is not at Waston,' said the lawyer half angrily.

'I know it isn't,' John returned.

'Great Heaven!' cried Mr. Packmore, recoiling as the fancy struck him. 'Has Mr. Bushell been tampering—? Under the seal of professional confidence, now!'

'I can only refer you again to Mr. Bushell,' John answered. 'The reasons which actuate him to an unconditional surrender are cogent enough, no doubt, if you can arrive at them.'

'Quite right to be discreet, Mr. Keen,' said the elder. 'But I won't and can't accept the responsibility of so vast a transfer without knowing more than I know at present.'

The business was broken off for an hour or two, whilst old George's lawyer applied the forensic thumbscrew to his client, and after a tough time of it squeezed the truth out of him. Then he came back and relieved himself by a quotation.

'There are more things in heaven and earth, Mr. Keen,' said he, 'than are dreamt of in our philosophy. I should never have thought it. So respected--and with one foot in the grave!'

'He has explained the absence of the certificate?' asked John.

'To my amazement,' the conveyancer answered,

There was no more hinting at delay, and John wrote two other letters, one to Joe and one to Dinah, announcing that the business was practically at an end. Old George, by his lawyer's advice, prepared to sell up everything and to retire from business, as the only way by which the enormous diminution of his capital could be hidden from the public eye.

CHAPTER XXX.

JOHN KEEN found busier employment through the unexpected revelation Dinah had made to him than he had ever expected to find in Wrethedale. But howsoever busy he might be, there were intervals in which he found time enough to think upon one inexhaustible theme, and that theme, naturally enough for a lover, was the inexpressible charms of Miss Ethel Donne. Perhaps the young man had been in love before, but if he had been he contrived to forget all about it. There was but one woman in the world, and she less a woman than an angel. Getting at John's thoughts, one would conceive that there never had been any human creature of such perfections, and never again would be. 'There is none like her—none! Nor shall there be till our summers have deceased.' It is the proper belief of a lover, and comes natural to him.

It is not to be said that the young man had—or, being a lover, needed—any very distinct opportunities of close observation on which to base the glorious theorem which he never wearied of propounding. 'Tis distance lends enchantment to the view. But to worship a good woman is surely worth an honest man's while. To be able in married life to recognise no disillusion, but only a gradual toning down of colour—that is inevitable, and, like many inevitable things, a blessing—one must have made a better choice and be a better man than the average. But here is a fine-natured, honest-hearted, loyal young fellow in love with a good and charming girl, and if only the girl could be brought to be in love with him I could find it in my heart to join their hands, with the best hope for their future, and to say, 'Bless you, my children! Bless you!' Playwrights and novelists are the most inveterate of matchmakers.

John's especial disadvantage was that Ethel knew his condition. Had he always disguised it, she could have looked upon him with greater favour, but now his very attachment made it difficult for her even to like him. Hardly a year and a half had gone by since the man she loved had proved himself a scoundrel, and she had loved him dearly. John felt his case no more hopeful on

account of young George's reappearance, though he knew Ethel's change of feeling towards her late lover well enough. But that reappearance had opened a wound which time had not yet healed, and her truer lover knew it.

Sometimes, in his consultations with Dinah, Ethel was present, and she was aware of all that went on on that side. Her courage, her faithfulness to friendship, her self-possession, all seemed more than human in John's eyes, and there are no words for his pity and admiration. If only the young lawyer would or could have hidden the too-evident signs of feeling which every look afforded, Ethel, under these new circumstances, might have liked him well enough; but, as it was, she fought him off by a chill abruptness of demeanour altogether unnatural in her, and John, full of warmth as he was within, became frozen on approaching her, except for his eyes, which did her continual homage.

But it is a long lane indeed which has no turning, and the relationship of these two young people underwent a sudden change. Joe had been thinking over the young lawyer's scheme for sounding Dinah's feelings concerning him, and as affairs grew day by day more urgent, and less and less within his own control, the plan began, out of his sheer desperation, to commend itself to him. So that one evening, when John called upon him under cover of the darkness at Mr. Bowker's cottage, the bewildered husband and father capitulated.

'Who is the young lady?' he asked, after reminding John of the hint he himself had given.

'She is a Miss Donne,' answered the young fellow, blushing. They sat in Joe's bedroom by the light of a single tallow candle, and the blush passed unnoticed.

'The girl,' said Joe, 'to whom George was engaged to be married?'

'The same,' John answered. 'I can pledge myself to her discretion and to her self-command. And she is so devoted to your wife, sir, that she would do anything for her sake. I want to ask you again to remember how easy the task will be. It seems to me that a very bold hint would be needed before your wife would suspect the meaning of the inquiries.'

'Since I have been living here,' said Joe, sitting with both elbows on the table, and staring at the feeble flame of the candle, with his head between his hands, 'I have learned a good deal about them both—my wife and my son. He ruled her and even bullied her at times. Now, she's going to be wealthy, and she'll want the control of the lad, and I don't see how I can keep a hold upon him. I don't want to neglect my duty any longer. I could

take him with me to the West perhaps, but she'd break her heart to lose him without knowing why ; and if she knew why, you can see that all the mischief which could come of my declaring myself would be done, and any chance of good to her in it would be missed. Now, if I could go back to her, and acknowledge myself, and then undertake the care of the lad, and, if need be, go away again and let her see him at times, and know of his well-doing— —'

The speaker's voice, though he tried hard to steady it, became so shaky that he had to pause and leave his sentence unfinished.

' You authorise me, then,' said John, ' as a first step, to tell Miss Donne the whole story ? '

' I am at a deadlock now,' Joe answered. ' I've seen that it was coming. I must either go away, and let her suffer anew at the hands of that unhappy lad—and suffer she will, unless there is somebody to control him—or I must make myself known to her. But,' he added suddenly, with a shrinking of the heart, ' don't let Miss Donne go too far. Let me know, to begin with, whether my going back will be the larger of the two evils. I can well believe it might be.'

' Rely upon it,' said John, ' that all discretion shall be used.'

Joe was fain to be content and to wait, while John went back to the little western village, and set his scheme in motion. Of course it was charming for John to have such a chance of approaching Ethel, and of course it was terrible to him to have to take it. He began by writing a letter.

' Dear Miss Donne'—(he felt ridiculously inclined to set down the first word in capitals)—' I have a secret which most nearly concerns the happiness of your friend Mrs. Joseph Bushell. I believe it's the one thing in the world she most desires to learn. May I presume to ask your assistance and advice?—Yours most respectfully,

' JOHN KEEN.

' P.S. I must beg of you not to drop a hint of this at present to Mrs. Bushell.'

In answer to this brief and somewhat misleading epistle came an answer delivered by the hands of Mrs. Donne's little maid-servant. Miss Donne would be obliged if Mr. Keen would call at seven o'clock that evening.

At seven o'clock that evening Mr. Keen called. Ethel sat in the small front parlour to receive him, and, except for the maid servant, was alone in the house—Mrs. Donne having providentially accepted an invitation to tea. When the girl arose and offered her hand, a most unprofessional flutter started in John's heart, but outwardly he was as cool as a cucumber.

' What is your secret, Mr. Keen ? ' asked Ethel.

'The secret is not mine, Miss Donne, though I am master of it,' John answered. 'If it belonged to me I would offer it, if I offered it at all, without reservation and without conditions. But I am compelled to ask you, in the first place, to promise that you will not reveal it to Mrs. Bushell without the sanction of the person who is—with her—most interested in it.'

'I promise that,' the girl answered.

'Then,' said John, 'my secret is simply this: her husband is in England.'

Ethel rose and fronted him with her hands clenched, her cheeks flushed, and her eyes sparkling with anger and surprise.

'That man is still alive?' she asked.

'Before you judge him,' returned John, 'let me tell his story. It will not take long. Mr. George Bushell, of whose rascalities you know a little, but not much, was his nephew's only correspondent. He left the runaway in ignorance of his parents' death, and stuck to the money they left behind them. That you knew or partly knew already. But he wrote in answer to his nephew's particular inquiries about Miss Dinah Banks, that Dinah Banks had married. Joseph Bushell believed his wife faithless to him, and stayed away, until after all these years he learned by a mere accident that this was false, and came over to make inquiries.'

'And how does all that concern Dinah's happiness, Mr. Keen?' asked Ethel. 'The man has heard that she is going to have the fortune he threw away, and now he comes back to live upon her.'

'On the contrary,' said John, 'he has amassed a fortune of his own. He has been in England for some months, and at any moment might have claimed the fortune for himself, but has given his best influence to securing it for her.'

'He has been away from her for six-and-twenty years now!' cried Ethel with supreme contempt. 'Let him go away again!'

'Miss Donne,' said the young fellow, warmed on the suffering Joe's behalf, 'you misjudge the man. His wife has not suffered alone. He has endured with her, and he has had great sorrows to bear since his return. When I first met him I had no sympathy with him, but I have learned to know him since then, and I believe that his wife ought to know that he is here. She is not an old woman, and when she has this fortune she will find suitors in plenty. That is inevitable. Suppose she should marry again—' he inwardly blessed Sir Sydney Cheston for having put that argument into his hands—'and suppose that afterwards the discovery should be made. That would be horrible, and none of us who have the secret could permit it to happen, but we should have then to say what we know now; and how could we accept the

responsibility of having kept it back from her? She ought to know it.'

'Do you wish me to break the news to her?' asked Ethel.

'No,' cried John, perceiving suddenly that his argument had altogether over-shot the mark. 'Personally, I long to see them together, because I believe that she would be happier after his return than she has ever been since I have known her, but he forbids the immediate revelation of the secret.'

'If he forbids it—' Ethel began contemptuously.

'There is a reason,' said John; 'and this is where I beg your help. His old friend Sir Sydney Cheston has done his best to persuade him to return, and I have exhausted all my arguments in the same behalf.'

'It is a pity to have spent so much good persuasion on such an object, Mr. Keen,' said Ethel.

'But he will only return,' John went on steadfastly, 'on one condition.'

'And that is—?' inquired Miss Donne with lofty scorn.

'That his declaration of himself will bring no new unhappiness on her.' Ethel was silent. 'All this time he has been robbed of his fortune, and swindled of his right to a happy married life.'

'He left her voluntarily,' said Ethel hotly.

'And was kept from her by a villainous fraud, Miss Donne. But this is all he has to say through me: that if his declaration of himself can smooth away any troubles she has yet to face, he will declare himself. If it could only add to her unhappiness, he will go away again. Have pity for him and for your friend, Miss Donne. He asks nothing but the knowledge of his duty. He only waits to know where duty seems to lie.'

'How can I help him?' asked Ethel, still scornful. From the first hour of her hearing Dinah's story she had hated and despised the runaway husband, and she was not going to change her mind on a sudden. It had been clear all along that he had been a good-for-nothing fellow. Why should she help to surrender Dinah to him again?

'You could help him by finding out whether his wife still cares for him, and whether she would be glad to have him back,' John urged gently, refusing to be beaten down by her contempt for Joe.

'Of course she cares for him! Why else has she kept single all her life, but because she cared for him! That is the way with women!' cried the girl, trembling with anger and her championship for the woman she loved. 'They love the wretches who use them so shamefully, and pine after them all their life long. Glad to

have him back again? Yes, poor weak thing! I know that well enough, Mr. Keen. But I will have no hand in the plot to bring him back, and I have no thanks for you who come here to ask me to take an office so ignoble. I will not trap my friend into a confession which would bring that man back again. I love her well enough to deny her wishes there.'

She spoke quietly enough, but with flaming cheeks and sparkling eyes, and an utterance unusually rapid.

' You mistake, Miss Donne,' said the young lawyer firmly. It was hard for him to have strengthened the poor opinion she had always held of him, or seemed to hold. ' I came to ask you to perform an act of the truest friendship, and I would rather die than ask you to do anything which would not become you as you are. Forgive me! There are troubles before Mrs. Bushell—unless she has her husband's help to fight them—as great, I fear, as any she has encountered yet, terrible as they have been. The man is not what you believe him, but, I pledge myself for him, a true man, with a kindly, honest heart. He has been hideously defrauded. Think of it, Miss Donne. For three-and-twenty years he lived in the belief that the wife of his youth had been false to him, and for half the time he was struggling with hardship and poverty, whilst that old villain who had deluded him and robbed him fattened on his fortune. He does not claim the fortune now. Does that say nothing in his favour? I believe with all my heart and soul,' cried John, in a great heat of friendly championship himself by this time, ' that the one thought he has, the one desire he has, is to spend his whole life in atoning to his wife for the sorrows she has borne. And if I believed one tittle less than that I would never have taken up his cause.'

' Mr. Keen,' said Ethel, ' I do you justice enough to believe that you are in earnest, and that he has imposed upon you.'

' If you could but see the man!' said John.

' I do not think my opinion of him at all likely to change,' answered Ethel quietly. ' And I certainly think that since he has stayed away so long, he can do nothing better or more generous or kindly than to stay away for good. Dinah will never want to marry again, and Mr. Joseph Bushell has done as much harm as any one man has a right to do. Let him go back to wherever he came from, and take his secret with him, and leave his wife in peace. If he should come here, I should certainly advise Dinah most strongly to give him his fortune and let him go.'

' I am sorry to find you against me in this matter,' said John, and he went away sorrowful.

But before he was half-way down the darkened village street a thought struck him and brought him to a standstill.

'Bravo!' he cried, 'the very ticket!' and with that vulgar exclamation he turned and walked briskly back again. This time he rang the bell at Dinah's house, and being admitted, gave the first shove to his new scheme.

'I have called to say,' he began, 'that everything is now ready for the transfer of your husband's property to your hands. I shall be greatly obliged if you can make it convenient to come down to Birmingham, where Mr. Packmore (who is engaged on the other side) and I can lay the necessary documents before you.'

'I don't want to go down there if I can help it, Mr. Keen,' said Dinah piteously.

'I'm afraid I must ask you to do it,' said John, cruel only to be kind. 'You need not go farther than Birmingham.'

He knew partly how Dinah dreaded a return to the place she had left in such unearned shame.

'If I must come,' said Dinah quietly, 'I must come.' It was all for the child for whom she had suffered so much. And now that he was beginning to act so nobly, and to struggle for himself, he was ten times more than ever worthy of any suffering she might endure. For, the young man had told her—making the best of a bargain he thought unpleasant—that he meant to be a man in future, and had declined her assistance with an air of martyr-like magnanimity inexpressibly affecting.

'I dare say,' said John with much innocence, 'you could persuade Miss Donne to accompany you. We shall not want to keep you more than a day or two.'

'Make the time as short as you can, Mr. Keen,' said Dinah. 'When shall you want me to be ready?'

'Consult your own convenience,' cried John, 'but make it as soon as you like. It will be best to have the business over,' he added cheerily.

'Yes,' Dinah answered. 'I'll speak to her about it, and I'll let you know to-morrow, Mr. Keen.'

On that understanding John went away, and the first result of this small *ruse* of his was that Ethel and Dinah and he all travelled down to the Midland capital together on the following afternoon. Old Daniel was quite beyond the understanding of any part of the story by this time, and Mrs. Donne knew no more of it than that her neighbour had come in suddenly for a great fortune which ought to have been hers long ago. She was not a mercenary woman, but she made no objection to her daughter's friendship with Dinah under these circumstances. John had guessed, and as

events proved had guessed rightly, that if Dinah visited the old country at all it would be in Ethel's company. Half his plan was accomplished, and now he had but to bring Ethel and Joe together to complete his scheme. For, after the manner of impetuous youth, he was persuaded that Ethel could no more fail to recognise the manliness of Joe's character than he had done. If she could but see the man ! as he had said to her. If she could but hear his wishes from his own lips, and see how real and how in earnest he was, she would surely consent to help him. And nobody, I am assured, will be likely to think any the worse of the young man for his generous efforts in behalf of such a cause. Joe by this time had fairly taken John's affections captive, and John was ready to swear by him as the honestest and most injured man in Great Britain. It is a fine thing to be young and to have these impetuous beliefs in human probity. They are often thrown away, but for once they bade fair to be expended on a good object.

When John had once got Ethel so near, he set to work to get her nearer still, but found unlooked-for difficulties in the way. Perhaps she misunderstood the purpose of that persistence with which he dodged her, and suspected an interest more personal to himself than that which really animated him. But at last, avoid him as she might, he caught her in a corridor of the hotel.

'Miss Donne,' he murmured, as she sought to pass him with a mere bow, 'I have something of the utmost urgency to say to you.' She could do nothing less than pause, without being downright rude to him. 'I am most glad you came here, for I think it forwards one of the dearest wishes I have in the world. Joseph Bushell is within five miles of us. Will you see him and judge him for yourself? For Dinah's sake!' he pleaded. 'Think how much hangs upon your judgment. It commits you to nothing. Will you see him ?'

Ethel was a woman, after all, albeit a very charming one. And being a woman, she could scarcely be insensible to the young fellow's disinterested earnestness, or to the flattery which so simply told her that the course of two lives depended on her judgment. I do not desire to lay too much stress upon the last. The appeal, 'For Dinah's sake !' might have been enough to shake down any little barrier of unwillingness. Perhaps, too, she was a trifle curious to see the man.

'Dinah must not know of it,' she answered. 'And I do not see how I can leave her.'

'If you will give me an hour after she has gone to bed to-night,' urged John, 'Mr. Bushell shall be here.'

'Very well,' she answered, 'I will see him.'

John, elated, and supposing all troubles over, made his swiftest way to Mr. Bowker's cottage, and despatched a messenger to the Buzzard, who returned with Joe. The young fellow found it a somewhat delicate thing to tell him that he was to go and be examined by a lady he had never seen, with a view to ascertain his fitness to be trusted with his own wife. But he blurted it out at last.

'Miss Donne is very much opposed to you, but I want you to see her yourself.'

Joe assented with a readiness which surprised his companion; but the truth of the matter was, that Joe's heart was growing hungrier and hungrier, and his scruples were beginning to be as nothing in his way. He was almost ready at moments to start off and throw himself upon Dinah's mercy without preliminaries. He had written half a ream of letters to her, and destroyed them as he wrote them, one by one.

So when darkness fell, the two went into town together, and Joe stayed at another hotel while John went on to spy out the land before him. Dinah retired early, and John darted away for her husband, brought him up in a cab within five minutes, and led him to the sitting-room where Ethel sat to receive them. It was not a small thing for Joe to enter the house in which his wife was sleeping, even though he were sure of not being discovered by her; to be so near to her, and yet to be sundered from her by the barrier of those six-and-twenty years of absence. He bore the impress of his emotions in his face, and it was natural that for a moment he should wish that he had not undertaken the venture.

Ethel rose to John's introduction of the new-comer, gave him a formal bow, and signed him to a seat. The first thing that crossed her mind was that Dinah would never (in the mere worthless, conventional sense of the word) be a lady, though she had the essentials of ladyhood (which are perhaps, after all, included in womanliness), whilst the man before her had at least the aspect of a gentleman. Even that, in her prejudiced mind, went against him. He would think Dinah's accent vulgar, and despise her homely ways and thoughts.

'I am obliged to you,' said Joe in the simple manly way habitual and natural to him, 'for having consented to meet me. Mr. Keen tells me that you are very much opposed to me, and I should have expected that. You know the facts of the case up to a certain point, and I need not trouble you by repeating them.'

He paused, and Ethel inclined her head. It was not easy to make way against her resolute coldness; but he went on.

'If I say anything which gives you pain, I can only ask you to

forgive me. When my son and I encountered each other in New York, I learned that my wife had never married again, and that my uncle's letter to that effect had held a cruel lie—he didn't know how cruel. Perhaps you know Mr. Bushell's handwriting?' he asked, drawing a book of memoranda from his breast pocket. 'There is his letter. I thought it advisable to bring it.'

Ethel glanced through the letter, which was yellow with age and much worn at the edges of the folds. 'There has been a gaish' (probably, gayish) 'wedding here last week when Dinah Banks was married at the Old Church. I am sorry to hear as you are nott doing well and being busy at this time no more from your affectionate uncle, George Bushell.' So it closed.

'Did you keep this letter, Mr. Bushell, with a view to any such contingency as this?' asked Ethel.

'No,' said Joe, with a simple sad surprise. 'I never thought at that time of coming back to England. It was years after that before I could have paid the passage-money.'

He folded up the letter, returned it to his pocket-book, and went on.

'That was the last line I ever had from England. Perhaps that was why I kept it. When my unhappy lad met me in America he was travelling under an assumed name, and I didn't guess who he was. But I resolved on coming back to England in consequence of the news he gave me. When I landed here I scarcely knew what I wanted to do, but I learned from Mr. Keen here everything my wife had suffered in my absence. I learned for the first time that I had a son, and I heard what had become of him. I went with Sir Sydney Cheston to the place where he was confined, and I found that he had been released by the intervention of my uncle George.'

This was news to Ethel, and it amazed her; but she said nothing, and gave no sign.

'Shortly after this my son wrote to Mr. Keen for assistance in discovering Dinah, giving an address at Borton. We went to see him together, and I recognised him as the man who had met me in New York, and had passed himself off as the brother of my old friend Sir Sydney Cheston.'

He saw how bitterly all this distressed Ethel, but he was too careful to spare her to apologise, and she bore it bravely. He went on.

'My wife, for her son's sake, has compelled my uncle George to surrender my father's fortune, and she is wealthy. What hold have I upon a son who has already proved himself unworthy of her? Can I leave her, knowing him as I do, to bear the burden

he will lay upon her? I have feared that my return might seem a greater evil in her eyes than even that. I have been afraid that after such an absence my return might seem the most terrible thing that could happen to her. Perhaps, if the news were broken to her gently, and if she knew that I had no further object than to help her in leading that poor lad to wiser ways, and that I made no demands upon her, and had no wish to fetter her freedom or control her slightest wish—as God knows I haven't!—she might consent to see me once, and let me take the part I want to take. Will you sound her first, Miss Donne?' he asked, hurrying along to hide the shaking of his voice. 'Not letting her guess at first that I am here or alive at all. Can you do that for me? And if my home-coming should seem too hard for her, I must find another way. Will you help me?'

'Mr. Bushell,' said Ethel, breaking her silence for the second time and speaking in a voice unlike her own, 'I value your wife very highly, and I can do nothing to disturb her peace. She has suffered as few women have suffered. If you desire nothing more than you have said—'

'Nothing!' Joe cried earnestly. 'Nothing!'

'I will consent to help you so far as this: I will speak to your wife of a problematical return, and will find out for you whether she would be likely to rejoice or grieve at it, and I will let you know.'

There was a diplomatic movement here which I hope nobody will think sinful. Ethel knew well enough already that there was no one thing in the world which could so rejoice Dinah's widowed heart as the news of Joe's return. For, when once the secret had been confessed, Dinah's constant speech went back to him, as of one long since dead, indeed, but always to be loved, and held in pious memory to the end. But the girl could not yet bring herself to confess as much to the returned exile. Still, there was with her, as there had been with John Keen in his first interview with the wanderer, a feeling which warred with her preconceived notions of the man.

'Will you answer me one or two questions, Mr. Bushell?' she asked suddenly.

'If I can,' he answered.

'How long was it after your departure from England before you received that letter?' she asked, pointing to the pocket-book which still lay on the table.

'Two years,' said Joe, hanging his head and crushing his beard against his breast.

'What kept you silent all that time?'

'Shame,' he answered, lifting his head as he spoke and drooping it again. 'I promised to go away and make a home for her. I failed. I scarcely made a living for myself. I promised to send her the certificate of our marriage, and I couldn't find it. And so I put off writing for a while, and then put it off for a while longer, and at last I was afraid to write at all. After a month or two I made sure that she would think me dead, and when uncle George's letter came I was certain that she did so.'

It was a poor excuse, and Ethel thought so. Joe had always thought it shameful, and was not likely to change his opinions now, when the weight of unavailing repentance had been laid upon him so heavily. It was clear that, whatever he had to bear, he had himself made his burden. 'You have made your bed,' says the harsh common-sense proverb, speaking the harsh common-sense of the world: 'lie upon it.' But it is no easier to lie upon it because the briars between the sheets were put there by your own hands. 'Nobody can have any pity for him,' says popular opinion; 'he brought it upon himself.' Nay—still pity him, perhaps the more that he can soften the pangs of suffering by the balm of no forgiveness.

(*To be continued.*)

An Upland Bog.

Bogs are not popular variations of scenery. Nine people out of ten, if called upon to describe one, would conjure up a picture very much, the reverse, certainly, of enticing. They are always, they would say, on a dead flat ; they are always swampy and desolate ; walk over one, and it takes you in up to the knees ; no grass grows ; no trees ; no flowers ; they are generally black or dull dusky brown. Now, this, it must be owned, does not sound cheerful ; still, setting aside for a moment the accuracy of the picture, it seems worth remembering that a good many other sorts and descriptions of scenery have in their day had to put up with charges to the full as ugly, and to the full as opprobrious, as these. The hard words flung against mountains would alone fill a goodly volume ; while that any sane being could be found perverted enough or preposterous enough to admire a moor or a prairie, a glacier or a snowfield, would to the æsthetes of the last century have seemed little, if anything, short of incredible. Since, then, taste has come round to these, who can say but what some day or other it may come round to bogs ? The hypothesis, at all events, is not an untenable one.

Returning for a moment to the more specific charges, it seems worth observing in passing that bogs are not all black and swampy ; still less are they all flat. So far from being always on the same dead level, they may be found at every elevation and at pretty nearly every conceivable angle. Climb up to the top of any of the mountains which encircle the western seaboard of Ireland, and ten to one but you will find that a bog has got up before you. Glance along any of the glacier-planed, crag-encumbered hillsides you pass, and you will probably see that a thin coating of peat has formed itself above, between, and around the rocks, binding them all together, and increasing, oddly enough, with greater rapidity in such situations uphill than down. As for the charge of nakedness, nothing can be further from the fact. So far from that, these upland bogs (for which alone, by the way, my present brief is held) are perfect mines and treasure-houses to the botanist. Within the compass of these islands it would be difficult to point to any similar extent of surface where a greater variety, or a more strikingly interesting variety, of plants is to be found. On such bogs the only spots to which the charge fairly applies are those which have been quite lately cut and skinned for turf ; and these—beauty, we know, being

only skin-deep—are undoubtedly at first unsightly enough. Even there, however, let a few months, or even a few weeks, pass, and nature begins to repair the injury. Feathery fronds of bracken creep along the oozy tops of the cuttings; sedums and bedstraws, and delicate tufts of the white-flowered cudweed, hook themselves into all the crumbling crevices; clumps of reed and red moor-grass spring up around and about the black little pools and puddles. Then, bit by bit, the heather reasserts itself; the scar is healed, and the spot becomes the same to all intents and purposes as it ever was. Prejudice, however, is a plant of stout growth, and that a prejudice exists in this direction is undeniable; in the teeth of which, let me, however, invite the reader to accompany me for a short stroll across one of these same upland bogs; not, I promise him, by any means a picked one—neither better nor worse, in fact, than scores of others—but for that very reason the fitter to serve as a type of the rest.

To reach it from the seaward side we have to scramble uphill through a wood—an old wood, but decrepit, it must be owned, rather than venerable. To the west it has been worn by the prevailing winds into a succession of bow-backed round-shouldered prominences, every leaf and twig clipped as rigorously into place as a gardener clips the back of his yew-tree peacock. Even the trunks themselves seem to have taken an eastward stoop, and to be clutching at one another for support, as if the whole community had started to climb uphill and had broken down in the attempt. A bullied much-to-be-pitied wood, holding its own, but not likely to gain fresh ground, or make any very distinguished figure in the world of trees. Below and around the base of this wood a broad expanse of grass spreads towards the sea. Low down, this is swampy and moss-grown, especially near the centre, where a small half-choked stream is percolating in a silent, ineffectual fashion through the rushes; farther on it rises again, however, in a smooth thyme-besprinkled slope, until this too is stopped by a jagged line of shore, beyond which may be seen a point of bare rock, a strip of yellow sand, and the two dark headlands which end the bay—at which point the Atlantic begins in earnest, stretching away, with never a break and hardly a sail, until we lose it amid the clouds on the horizon.

Now to get up the wood to the bog above—in itself a matter of some slight difficulty. A dense jungle of brambles, brakes, and seedling hazels covers the ground with a shaggy growth, through which we have to force our way. Path there is none, though there would seem to have been one once; but if so, it has long since fallen into disuse, and at present is utilised only by a small but obstreperous little stream, which comes hopping along, splashing

and clattering on its way, with very little regard to the interests of other wayfarers. In spite of being on a considerable slope, the ground is everywhere moist and spongy, recent rains having so thoroughly saturated the bog that it has ended by pouring down its superfluous water upon the wood, increasing what already was nearly at the point of saturation. We come to places where our feet sink deep in the heavy ground, and where the grass and mosses appear to be doing their best to engulf the trees. One good-sized birch has already fallen, pulled over by its weight of ivy. Evidently it is not long down, for the leaves are still fresh, but already it has been taken possession of by a dense crop of ferns, mosses, lichens, and their allies, which seem bent upon swallowing it up whole, and enveloping it in a blanket of greenery. Funguses, big and little, red, brown, black, and apoplectic-looking, start up everywhere, one little pink-tipped company having mounted to the very top of the fallen trunk, where their liver-coloured stems and gaily speckled domes are telling well against the satiny bark. Ahead is a rock-wall of dark grey felstone, weathered white in places, which skirts one side of the wood. This, too, appears to partake of the general dilapidation, for its stones are falling about in all directions. Underneath are large cairns, half-filled with Blechnums and Lastreas ; while deeper still, under the slow, continuous drip, Hymenophyllums are spreading in a mossy sheet. Both species or varieties of Hymenophyllums are to be found at certain spots in this wood, the one called tunbridgense being, however, decidedly the commoner of the two.

Nothing is more striking in these old and decaying woods than the utter stillness and stagnation of the atmosphere. Down here, for instance, hardly a breath stirs, though we are still within a stone's-throw of the Atlantic, and looking overhead can see the battered leaves tossed to and fro as the gusts come sweeping in from the west. There is a strange and almost total absence of life, too. A few Geometridœ flutter aimlessly about, or settle on the tree-trunks. Now and then some bumble-bee from outside makes a raid upon the purple scabious which rise up out of the wet grass ; far below we can hear the gulls and cormorants disputing over their fishery laws in the bay beneath, and from time to time there comes a dull rumble of wheels, or the sharp trot, trot, trot of a horse's hoofs along the distant road ; otherwise, the silence is complete.

It is warm, too, with a damp warmth like that of a fern-house. A fern-house truly ! Glance for a moment at the wealth of cryptogamic life surrounding us. Many of these—the lichens and liverworts especially—are so small that a magnifying-glass is

needed to detect them ; yet the tale they tell of warmth and moisture is unmistakable, and is repeated on a larger scale by the huge festoons of polypodium, which hang from every branch and trunk ; one tall green circlet, tipped with its golden spores, rising from the very top of a stunted poplar, out of which all life of its own has long ago departed.

Gradually, however, as we mount higher, we find that the atmosphere freshens. The ferns and mosses become less luxuriant, the wood-sorrel, always flaccid in the shade, begins to straighten its drooping leaflets. The sunlight comes brushing over the top of the bank, and the breeze brings down to us the scent of the furze and the broom. We scramble hastily up the last few steps, and find ourselves upon the bog at last.

Here we are met by a sudden contrast. If in the inside of the wood life seemed at a standstill, here, on the contrary, everything is awake and astir. Rabbits scuttle away as we approach ; wood-pigeons are cooing in the trees overhead ; dragonflies by thousands flit to and fro over the short grass ; the whole air is filled with small buzzing, rustling, humming noises ; the furze- and broom-bushes are yellow with blossom, and both are visited by a multitude of insects.

The fact is that, stunted and ragged as these woods are, they constitute by their mode of growth a complete screen—dense, solid, and felt-like—against the prevailing wind. So dense, indeed, is the foliage, that no storm coming from the Atlantic side seems able to penetrate it. Come up here on a blustery day, and you will find that shelter is to be had, though half a gale may be blowing outside, and the very air is salt with the scud flying up from the sea. Being open, too, to the south and east, the spot is a regular sun-trap ; while the high banks, built to protect the trees, are dry even when water is standing all over the surface of the bog ; all which causes combine to make it a perfect haven of refuge—the rallying-point and *rendezvous* of the neighbourhood ; denizens of the wood and of the bog meeting as on neutral ground, with many a stray straggler not to be found either in wood or bog. Up and down the steep grass-covered banks the little viviparous lizard (the only true reptile indigenous in Ireland) may be seen swiftly but cautiously stealing along, its tongue flicked out in front of it in search of flies. It is a shy little creature, much shyer than its green relative, wriggling away into crevices and under brushwood the instant a step draws near ; and only by waiting a long time, and by remaining absolutely still, have you a chance of seeing it at work ; and even then, let the small black eye but catch yours, and it is gone in a trice. If we pursue our walk along the broad

dock-fringed dyke which encircles the top of the wood, we shall probably not have gone very far before we alight upon a humble cousin of this last—viz. the common smooth newt (*Lissatriton punctatus*). In these we behold, with one exception, all the representatives of the two great orders Reptilia and Amphibia which have any strict right to be called indigenous in Ireland. The third—a quaint little being known as the Natterjack toad, and readily distinguished from every other toad by the yellow line down the middle of its back—appears to be confined to Rosbech, on Dingle Bay, and a few other places in Kerry. How it came to establish itself in this part, and *only* in this part, of the island is a mystery; the local belief is that it was put ashore there out of a boat, but of this there appears to be not so much as a fraction of evidence.

The common frog, on the other hand, is well-known to have been only introduced into Ireland as lately as the beginning of the last century, when a handful of frog-spawn was deposited by a Dr. Gythers or Guithers in a ditch belonging to the grounds of Trinity College. For some time it seems to have contented itself with the neighbourhood of the University; but twenty years later its appearance is announced at a distance of forty miles away, after which it gradually spread over the entire country, and may now be met with right up to the tops of the mountains, two to three thousand feet above the sea. As regards earlier days, the evidence on this point is not a little conflicting. Thus, as far back as the beginning of the ninth century, St. Donatus, Bishop of Etruria, assures us on his episcopal authority that no frogs or toads ever have existed, or as a matter of fact *could* exist, in Ireland. Three centuries later, however, we are informed by Giraldus Cambrensis that in his time a frog was taken alive near Waterford and brought into court, Robert de la Poer being then warden. ‘Whereat,’ he says, ‘Duvenold, King of Ossory, a man of sense amongst his people, beat upon his head and spake thus: “That reptile is the bearer of doleful news to Ireland.”’ Giraldus is careful, however, to assure us that ‘no man will venture to suppose that this reptile was ever born in Ireland, for the mud there does not, as in other countries, contain the germs from which frogs are bred;’ indeed, in another part of the ‘Topographia Hibernica’ we learn that frogs, toads, and snakes, if accidentally brought to Ireland, on being cast ashore, immediately ‘turning on their backs, do burst and die:’ which sufficiently surprising statement is even outdone by another and a yet more illustrious authority, that of the Venerable Bede, whom Giraldus quotes as follows: ‘No reptile is found there’ (in Ireland), ‘neither can any serpent live in it, for though oft carried thither out of Britain, so soon as the ship draws near the land, and

the scent of the air from off the shore reaches them, immediately they die.' So efficacious was the very dust of Ireland, that on 'gardens or other places in foreign lands being sprinkled with it, immediately all venomous reptiles are driven away.' So, too, with fragments of the skins and bones of animals born and bred in Ireland; indeed, parings from Irish manuscripts, and scraps of the leather with which Irish books were bound, were amongst the accredited cures for snakebite until late on in the middle ages. Of his own personal experience, Giraldus relates to us how upon a certain occasion a thong of Irish leather was in his presence drawn round a toad; and that, 'coming to the thong, the animal fell backward as if stunned. It then tried the opposite side of the circle, but meeting the thong all round it shrank from it as if it were pestiferous. At last, digging a hole with its feet in the centre of the circle, it disappeared in the presence of much people.'

Leaving our sunny bank and the shelter of the wood, we saunter on over the yielding surface of bog, and presently find ourselves upon higher and more exposed ground, where the broom-bushes become scantier and more stunted, and finally disappear. From this point we have a widely extended view, first across a belt of lately cut bog, where the turf stands heaped in chocolate-coloured piles and ridges; next over a succession of older dykes, crumbled out of their first formality, and weathered into every shade, from browns and brick-reds to the palest of greys and fawn-colours; here the heather again begins, running out in long irregular peaks and promontories, varied with marshy bits, bristling with reed-mace and snowy with bog-cotton; then a long dark frontier of fir-trees, and over that again the mountains rising blue against a paler sky.

Returning to the immediate foreground, we find the ground dotted over with heathery tussocks, between which lie broad spaces, some bare and brown, others covered with sphagnum whose loose fibrous texture retains the water like a sponge. These 'soft bits,' as they are locally called, are covered with sundews, reddening the whole surface with their hairy leaves. With a little pains, all the British species may be found hereabouts—viz., the round-leaved sundew (*Drosera rotundifolia*), common on every marsh and boggy moor in the kingdom; the long-leaved (*Drosera longifolia*), more local, but still not uncommon; and the so-called English sundew (*Drosera anglica*), which name, by the way, is decidedly a misnomer, it being a very much less common plant in England than in either Scotland or Ireland. If we pull up one of the plants, which there is no difficulty in doing, and clear it of the loose mud, we shall find that the roots are thin, short, and weakly

looking—serving, in fact, merely as anchors and water-pipes; while, for a supply of that nitrogen which every plant requires, it is, as most people are aware, mainly, if not exclusively, dependent on insects. Of these the two lesser species would appear to content themselves with the smallest of Diptera and Lepidoptera, whereas *anglica* will occasionally tackle larger prey, and I have seen it with a good-sized moth (*a noctua*) attached to and nearly covering the entire disk, the long tentacle-like hairs being closely inflected over the victim, whose struggles are soon put an end to once the sticky secretion exuding from the hairs closes above the trachea. When the leaf reopens we find that nearly the whole of the insect (be it fly, moth, or beetle) has disappeared, even the wings being reduced to a few glittering fragments. No animal substance, in fact, comes amiss to its voracity; fragments of bone, hide, meat-fibrine, and even (according to Mr. Darwin) tooth enamel, softening and in time dissolving under the powerful solvent secreted by the glands. Whether the *Drosera* has the power of attracting its prey, or must wait until chance sends it within its clutches, seems undecided; but in the case of a rare little Portuguese relative, one *Drosophyllum lusitanica* (growing, unlike other members of the family, on dry hills in the neighbourhood of Oporto), some such power appears to exist, the people of the neighbourhood using it as a flycatcher, and hanging it up upon their walls for that express purpose.

This carnivorous habit or instinct (whatever we may agree to call it) is shared to a greater or less extent by all the Droseraceæ, such as the well-known Venus's fly-trap, the *Byblis gigantea* of Australia, and a small but singularly interesting aquatic cousin, known to botanists by the terrible name of *Aldrovanda vesiculosa*, a mere scrap of a thing, whose leaves have the power of shutting vice-like over every unfortunate insect which approaches them, and which thus finds itself enclosed for life in a floating prison. If characteristic of this order, however, this carnivorousness is by no means confined to them. Here, for instance, is a plant, not a sundew, or even related to the sundews—belonging, in fact, to a widely different order—yet to the full as carnivorous as they. From its leaves, as from a green rosette, rises a long flower-stalk surmounted by a delicate pendulous bell of the faintest, most ethereal shade of violet; surely this, one would say, is no flesh-eater? Yet, if anything, the butterworts rather exceed the sundews in their voracity. Look closely at the leaves, and you will see that, while some are flat and flaccid, others are slightly dog-eared along the edges. Unroll one of these dog-ears, and you will there find the remains, not of one, but of a dozen unfortunate flies

and midges in all stages of assimilation ; some already half digested, others still alive and struggling to escape from their glutinous prison. If, further, you place a fragment of meat, bone, or indeed of any nitrogenous substance, upon the edge of one of the fully expanded leaves, little by little you find that the leaf begins curling upwards, until the two edges approach and then meet ; the morsel is lost to sight, becoming entirely immersed in its bath of secretion, where it remains until all the nutritive parts are absorbed.

Viscous as the whole surface of the leaf is, it does not seem as if this process of digestion was carried on with the same rapidity or facility in the centre as at the sides, and as there are in this case no long hairs to act as locomotive organs, it is not unusual to see flies and other small insects lying partially dried up and useless in the centre of the leaf. In another respect, too, this extreme viscosity appears at first sight inconvenient, the entire surface being frequently covered with small twigs, leaves, particles of boggy fibre, and other matters which the plant has apparently no power of getting rid of. In the end this, however, may prove an advantage rather than otherwise, since it has been ascertained to feed not alone on animal but also on vegetable substances ; the extreme stickiness of the leaves causing them, moreover, to act as a *chevaux de frise*, hindering small but industrious ants from making their way up the flower-stalk to the corolla.

The British butterworts are not numerous, and, with one Alpine exception, may all be found upon the bogs of the south and west of Ireland ; one species (or according to Bentham, variety), and that the largest and handsomest we possess, being confined to those of Kerry and a portion of Cork, reappearing again in the south-west of France and occurring at intervals along the entire Atlantic coasts of Spain and Portugal.

Nearly allied to these last are the bladderworts (*Utriculariae*), a quaint little genus, all or nearly all the British species of which may be found here or hereabouts. These, too, are flesh-eaters, the trap in this instance being set not in the leaves, but in the small air-bladders, which are made, says Sir John Lubbock, on the principle of an eel-trap, and which, if opened, will frequently be found to contain insects.

Edging away from our present decidedly moist and perilous position, where the ground quakes and quavers under foot in a fashion which suggests its speedily opening and swallowing us—assimilating us, in fact, much as the flies are assimilated by the sundews—we presently enter upon a drier and steadier region, where the tussocks (or hassocks, as old Gerard Boate calls them) are smaller and firmer, giving a better ‘take off’ as we

spring from one to the other. Few places afford pleasanter walking than a reasonably dry bog. Being so much wider above than below, these tussocks act like so many spring-boards, giving a delightfully elastic impetus to the foot as it leaves them, so that we seem to get over the ground in very much less time than we should have done had we clung to the roads. There is an endless variety, too. Now perhaps a peewit crosses our path with trailing wings and apparently broken legs—a time-honoured ruse which unfortunately seldom succeeds in diverting attention from its nest—or the next instant a snipe or redshank rises with a sudden whir-r-r-r, which for the moment brings our heart into our mouths; or, again, our attention is attracted to something new in the shape of plant or shell or insect; for no two yards are alike.

Considering to what an extent the bogs of Ireland run into and are mixed up with the cultivated ground, you might naturally expect to find that the two partook to a great extent of the character of one another. The reverse, however, is the case. Cross from a field into a bog, and you immediately find yourself amongst a totally new order of things—new plants, new birds, new insects—even the ubiquitous daisies and ragweeds, which do cross from one to the other, being more or less altered by the transit, sometimes, paradoxical as it sounds, being actually stunted and starved for lack of moisture: for it must be remembered that although a bog, as a whole, is of course far wetter than the same extent of cultivated ground, on the other hand there are often more absolutely dry spots upon its surface, the tops of the tussocks, for instance, being frequently crisp with dryness, while in the ‘plashy parts’ around water may be standing several inches deep.

Clambering over another dyke, we suddenly find ourselves knee-deep in heather, out of which moths rise by dozens as we advance. On dark days, or when rain is impending, it is curious how still moths will remain, even though you actually brush against the very twig or blade of grass they are resting on; and should you catch sight of one (which is extremely unlikely), you may even pick it up betwixt the finger and thumb without its making an effort to escape. Probably, however, you will not see one, though hundreds may be about. Nowhere, perhaps—nowhere, certainly, in these islands—does protective colouring obtain to a greater degree than amongst the insects (and I might add the birds) which are found haunting the moors and bogs. Take, for instance, the oak-egger (a true moorland species, despite its name): here both wings are of a deep chocolate brown, shaded with a broad band of dusky orange; and so perfect is the match between it and the ground, that I have seen it start from off a

sod at my feet, where, in spite of its large size, it was, until it moved, absolutely invisible. So, too, with the drinker (*Odonestis potatoria*), the fox moth (*Bombyx rubi*), the emperor moth (*Saturnia carpini*), and others, all common and all day fliers, but all, though handsome showy insects, rigidly confined in their colouring to two tints, namely, brown more or less banded and streaked with reddish-orange, precisely the two shades everywhere prevailing on moors and bogs.

But we have now reached the highest point of our pilgrimage, and may begin to travel down again. Below us, about a quarter of a mile away, a small lough or 'lougeen' (*Anglice* pond) glistens grayly out of its setting of heather. From it, as we approach, there rises what at first appears to be a whole flock of wild duck, presently resolving itself into five individuals—four widgeons and a teal—which begin wheeling overhead in gradually narrowing circles, but well out of gunshot range, until they see us retire, when down they will plop again to their lodgings amongst the reeds. Crossing their flight come a few of the green plover (locally called 'pilibine') in their full summer plumage; while from high overhead, somewhere between us and the nearest cloud, comes the drumming of a snipe, sounding now here and now there, as it skims lightly and buoyantly through the fields of air.

As we draw nearer we find, first, that the lougeen itself is as round nearly as a milk-pan, and secondly, that it is hemmed in on all sides by a ring of heathery turf, save at one point where a long lichen-covered ridge of rock runs out into the water. The heather, too, is much more luxuriant here than elsewhere; the ground rising in a prominent ring, which, banking up the water, hinders it from escaping. Looking over the side nearest us, we find that it consists of what at first sight we take to be some sort of black porous rock, but a poke with a stick proves it to be merely peat, hardened by the constant pressure of the water into a dense felt-like consistency. Like many others on the bogs, this lough has no outlet, and in all probability owes its origin to some spring over which the turf was unable to form, and through whose constant supply of water the heather is kept growing all the year round. Be this as it may, a pleasanter or more sloth-inducing spot in which to while away an idle hour it would be hard to find: the heather affording the most luxurious of couches; the green, grey, and violet landscape spreading below us in all its wonderful varieties of light and shade. Lying prone upon the bank, we look along the surface of the water and see it starred with a thousand dimples where the gnats and stone-flies just flip it with their wings as they pass. Now and then a fish—justly irritated at the sight of

so much good food going to waste—rises to the top with a splash, the ripples running in curved lines of silver to the shore. How have the fish contrived to get into this lough, which has neither outlet nor inlet? There, reader, is a problem for you. That they are here, however, is indisputable, as you, if a fisherman and not above landing such extremely small fry, may find for yourself any day in the week you please.

Hark! a sudden sound of wind. First, far amongst the hills; then coming nearer and nearer. The low sleepy lap of the water changes to a livelier note as the waves come splashing up against the bank, setting every little rush and water-weed a-quiver. But it was only a passing breeze; presently it dies away; the water settles to rest with a sleepy gurgle; the weeds and rushes leave off quivering; the silence settles; and in all the wide panorama of hill and plain and sea and sky, save the birds overhead and the insects on the lough, nothing seems to be living and breathing except ourselves. On a bright cloudy morning (the two adjectives—in Ireland, at all events—are not so contradictory as they sound!) the effects of light and shade to be seen from this point are sometimes very striking; flash following flash, shadow succeeding shadow, so quickly, so sharply, so vividly, that the shapes are formed and lost again, almost before the eye has time to detect them. Nay, even on a mere prosaic afternoon like the present, which has nothing particular in the way of atmospheric brilliancy to boast of, there is beauty enough, and beauty of colouring too, in the scene to satisfy even the most insatiable of eyes. Take the immediate foreground, for instance: under the opposite bank lies a broad, inky-black shadow, above which a high cornice of ling and heather nods downward at its reflection below. Yet a little farther, where the ridge projects, the ripples are following one another in long glancing lines, sending a network of reflections upwards as they go. Here the tints are much more varied: black up to a foot or two above the present level of the water, from which point upwards the rock is dappled with lichens of every shade, from white to intensest most dazzling orange. Above this again, the grass and heather stretch away until they meet the advancing line of fir-trees, whose trunks take up and repeat the reds and browns of the bog. Turning our head a little to the right, we see—a dozen yards, perhaps, from the bank—a small rocky island, scantily covered with thin yellowish grass, a few dilapidated-looking bushes here and there showing above the stones. Two years ago this island was one sheet of young birch and mountain ash, but alas! a dry season came; the water sank, leaving a passage for the marauders, and now the trees have been pared and gnawed down

to the very ground ; the destroyers in this instance being not alone, I suspect, sheep or goats, but rabbits, which swarm amongst the sandhills along the edge of the shore.

Leaving our lough still dimpling and sparkling in the sunshine, we again saunter leisurely onward, and presently come up to the advanced outpost of fir-trees—a sorry-looking company, undersized and ill-disciplined ; anything, evidently, but secure in their position, and much domineered over by the original possessors of the soil, in the shape of big thistles and long wiry grasses and briars, which have their own views on agrarian matters, and have no notion of surrendering possession to new-comers—especially Scotch ones ! From this to the edge the bog has been partially drained, though already the trenches are more than half filled up with sphagnum, which seizes upon every fallen stick and leaf and piece of bark, weaving all into a platform upon which to raise itself. Here the walking, it must be owned, is uncommonly bad, the ground rising and falling in a succession of crumbling heaps and oozy hollows. Much of it is still unplanted, and bare save for a sprinkling of sedums and bedstraws and pink-flowered centaury, with now and then a furze-bush. We pass numerous bog-holes, out of which the turf has been cut, and the water has since got in, forming pools deep as wells and black as the waters of Styx ; yet even here ferns and mosses have sprung up along the edges, and the small white-petalled crowfoot floats its light cup uninjured on the inky surface. In spots like these the bracken is a public benefactor. Where the turf has been stripped, and the ground left in bare and hideous nakedness, it is invariably the first thing to spring up, even the black uninviting sides of the cuttings being feathered with its fronds. It does not seem ever to grow close and tall in such situations, but is apt after a time to die away, or ‘miff off,’ as the gardeners say, when other things spring up to take its place.

In sensibly our wood thickens, forming now a compact screen, through a break in which comes a silvery glint of water. Leaping a dyke, whose sulkily moving waters are covered with a wealth of frogbit and avens, we force our way through brake and brier, and between fir-trees whose lower branches offer an undesirably compact and bristly resistance, and presently find ourselves upon the shores of another lake, larger than the first, but so lost and shut in with trees that it would be easy to pass within a stone’s-throw without so much as suspecting its existence. A nearly obliterated track points to a rough green causeway which crosses one end of the lake. Midway are the rotting remains of a sluice-gate, through the ragged dilapidated woodwork of which the water trickles slowly to the marsh below. Crossing this, we reach an older part

of the wood, where the fir-trunks have attained a somewhat more respectable girth, and their branches, meeting overhead, create a sudden twilight. Russet-coloured fir-needles cover the ground, the low long-drawn lights and shadows mapping it all out into a pattern of brown and ochreous yellow. There is little or no undergrowth, but huge funguses, streaked and blotched with purple and liver-colour, start up everywhere, with here and there a patch of tansy or of the yet brighter and more irrepressible ragweed. Underfoot the ground feels hollow and treacherous, and where the rabbits have been burrowing the surface is so honeycombed that it is anything but easy to pick one's steps without coming to grief.

A glance shows that these trees must have been planted before the bog was as much drained as at present, their roots in many places being laid bare by the shrinkage of the ground, yawning rifts and miniature crevasses opening up in every direction as if a mild form of earthquake had lately passed by. In one place this is especially noticeable, the uneven drying of the under portion of the bog having caused the ground to sink down in a series of undulations, like a magnified ridge and furrow. Here not only are the roots laid bare, but the trunks themselves have toppled about in every variety of distorted and contorted angle; some bending down and then up in a sort of double curve; some only slightly inclined, while others again are nearly horizontal, clinging only to the soil by a portion of their roots, while their upper branches, bowed down by the constant pressure of the storm, sweep the ground beyond. Delightful at all times and under all circumstances, a pine-wood grown upon a bog is to me the most delightful of all. Underneath, varying the monotonous carpeting of fir-needles, the foot sinks deep in moss, not wet, as on the more open bogs, but dry as a Persian carpet, and sheeted in springtime with flowers —bright blue bugles and snowy potentils, with the long trailing tendrils of the fumitorys and the yellow vetchlings. Looking up through the rifts in the bent and wind-worn branches, the clouds may be seen sailing slowly eastward. A sudden wild, shrill cry, and a seagull darts past, bringing our thoughts suddenly back to that Atlantic from which a moment before we seemed so far removed. Where the trees stand a little apart, the ground is thickly littered over with the russet-coloured masses of last year's bracken, through the midst of which, gay with the insolence of youth, rise the tall stems of their successors, each spreading forth its banner to the breeze. Here, too, the lings and heathers grow often to an immense height; and even while these are still brown and sere, everything else is agog with life: bearberries and bilberries, brooms and bog-myrtles, with asphodels, centauries, St.

John's worts, and a whole throng of lesser fry, disputing with one another for every inch of the boggy soil.

Following the guidance of the narrow and now well-nigh obliterated track, we presently come out upon another and a different view of the lake, whose shores we have now nearly circled in our walk. Opposite—beyond the yellow line of reeds and bulrushes—may be seen that scant and dilapidated army of fir-trees, through whose ineffectual resistance we lately won our way. Since we passed, some cows have come down to drink, and are standing knee-deep in the water, the red petticoat of their caretaker peering out from behind a rock. Between them and us a couple of bald-coots are cruising up and down, uttering their shrill harsh cry, surely of all bird-notes the most unmelodious. Nearer still, small weedy islands and promontories break up the shallows; and these, where the sunlight brushes against them, are seen to be still all agleam with dragon-flies and small ephemera, hieing busily to and fro before the day fails.

Standing here upon the brink, the bronzed surface of the lake serves as a mirror in which every wayfarer overhead is shown without our having to crane our necks in search of them. First, a string of wild ducks passes, their legs and breasts dyed red in the failing sunlight; then a few belated swallows darting distractedly hither and thither; next a couple of rooks, followed at a little distance by their ‘sisters and their cousins and their aunts,’ all announcing vociferously that the proper hour for bedtime has come. As the hubbub dies away in the distance, a wood-pigeon crosses and settles itself to rest in a tree above our heads. A water-hen, breaking up our looking-glass with its long dangling feet, retires with an angry ‘chuck, chuck’ into the bulrushes. Evidently the curfew of the lake has sounded, and the moment has come for us to depart. It is becoming slightly chilly, too. From the Atlantic side a wind is getting up, and comes sweeping with a low southing sound over the trees and across the lake, which shivers sympathetically through all its length. High up, somewhere on the hillsides, a disconsolate lamb is bleating; the shadows, black and fantastic, are rapidly swallowing up everything before them; and unless we are prepared to make a still closer and more intimate acquaintance with the bog than we have yet done, we must indeed be getting back before quagmires and tussocks, dry ground and soft bits, all become confounded in one common obscurity.

EMILY LAWLESS.

The Victim of a Virtue.

I AM one of those persons, envied for three months in the year and pitied for nine, who 'live a little way' out of London. In the summer our residence is a charming one; the garden especially is delightful and attracts troops of London friends. They are not only always willing to dine with us, but drop in of their own motion and stay for the last train to town. The vague observation 'any fine day,' or the more evasive phrase 'some fine day,' used in complimentary invitations, are then very dangerous for us to employ, for we are taken at our word, just as though we meant it. This would be very gratifying, however expensive, if it only happened all the year round. But from October to June nobody comes near us.

In reply to our modest invitations we then receive such expressions of tender regret as would convince the most sceptical: 'a previous engagement,' 'indisposition of our youngest born,' 'the horses ill,' some catastrophe or other, always prevents our friends from enjoying another evening with us 'like that charming one they spent last July.' They hope, however, to be given the same happy chance again, 'when the weather is a little less inclement,' by which they mean next summer. As for coming to dine with us in winter, they will see us further first—by which they mean nearer first. Sometimes at their own boards we hear this stated, though of course without any intentional application. Some guests will observe to us, *à propos* of dinners, 'It is most extraordinary how people who live half a dozen miles out of town will attempt to ignore the seasons and expect you to go and dine with them just as if it was August, through four feet of snow. It does really seem—as Jones, our excellent host, was saying the other day—the very height of personal conceit.'

As we have occupied our present residence for some years, we have long had the conceit taken out of us; but we have still our feelings. Our social toes are not absolutely frost-bitten, and when thus trodden upon we are aware of the circumstance. It grieves us to know what Jones has thought (and said) of us, and my wife drops a quiet tear or two during our drive home in the brougham. I am bound to confess it is rather a long ride. I find myself dropping asleep before we have left brick and mortar behind us, and as we cross the great common near our home I feel a con-

siderable change in the temperature. It is a beautiful breezy spot, with a lovely view in summer-time ; the playground of the butterfly and the place of business of the bee ; but in winter it is cold and lonely enough.

In the day-time there is nobody there at all. In the evening at uncertain intervals there is the patrol. In old times it used to be a favourite haunt of the Knights of the Road ; during whose epoch, by the by, I should fancy that those who lived in the locality found it even more difficult to collect their friends around them than now. It has still a bad name for tramps and vagabonds, which makes my wife a little nervous when the days begin to 'draw in' and our visitors to draw off. She insists upon my going over the house before retiring to rest every night and making a report of 'Ali's well.' Being myself not much over five feet high in my boots, and considerably less in my slippers (in which I am wont to make these peregrinations), it has often suggested itself to my mind that it would be more judicious to leave the burglars to do their worst, as regards the plate and things, and not risk what is (to me) much more valuable. Of course I could 'hold the lives of half a dozen men in my hand'—a quotation from my favourite author—by merely arming myself with a loaded revolver ; but the simple fact is, I am so unskilled in the use of any weapon (unless the umbrella can be called such), that I should be just as likely to begin with shooting number one (that is myself), as number two, the 'first ruffian.' 'Never willingly, my dear,' say I to Julia, 'will I shed the life-blood of any human being, and least of all my own.' On the other hand, as I believe in the force of imagination, I always carry on these expeditions, in the pocket of my dressing-gown, a child's pistol—belonging to our infant, Edward John—which looks like a real one, and would, I am persuaded, have all the effect of a real one in my hands without the element of personal peril. 'Miserable ruffians,' I had made up my mind to say, when coming upon the gang, 'your lives are in my power' (here I exhibit the pistol's butt), 'but out of perhaps a mistaken clemency I will only shoot one of you, the one that is the last to leave my house. I shall count six' (or sixteen, according to the number of the gang), 'and then fire.' Upon which they would, I calculated, all skedaddle helter-skelter to the door they got in at, which I should lock and double-lock after them. You may ask, Why double-lock ? but you will get no satisfactory reply. I know no more what to 'double-lock' means than you do, but my favourite novelist—a sensational one—always uses it, and I conclude he ought to know.

It was the beginning of a misty October, when the leaves had

fallen off early, and our friends had followed their example, and I had been sitting up alone into the small hours resolute to read my favourite author to the bitter end—his third volume, wherein all the chief characters (except the comic ones) are slain, save one who is left sound in wind and limb, but with an hereditary disposition to commit suicide. Somewhat depressed by its perusal and exceedingly sleepy, I went about my usual task of seeing all was right in a somewhat careless and perfunctory manner. All was right apparently in the dining-room, all right in the drawing-room, all right certainly in the study (where I had myself been sitting), and all right—no, not quite all right in our little back hall or vestibule, where, upon the round table, the very largest and thickest pair of navvy's boots I ever saw were standing between my wife's neat little umbrella and a pair of her gardening gloves. Even in that awful moment I remember the sense of contrast and incongruity struck me almost as forcibly as the presence of the boots themselves, and they astonished and alarmed me as much as the sight of the famous footprints did Robinson Crusoe, and for precisely the same reason. The boot and the print were nothing in themselves, but my intelligence, now fully awakened, at once flew to the conclusion that somebody must have been there to have left them, and was probably in the neighbourhood, and indeed under my roof, at that very moment. If you give Professor Owen a foot of any creature (just as of less scientific persons we say : Give them an inch, they will take an ell), he will build up the whole animal out of his own head ; and something of the Professor's marvellous instinct was on this occasion mine. I pictured to myself (and as it turned out, correctly) a monster more than six feet high, broad in the shoulders, heavy in the jowl, with legs like stone balustrades, and hands, but too often clenched, of the size of pumpkins. The vestibule led into the pantry, where no doubt this giant, with his one idea, or half a one, would conclude the chief part of our plate to be, whereas it was lying—unless he had already taken it : a terrible thought that flashed through my mind, followed by a cluster of others, like a comet with its tail—under our bed.

Of course I could have gone into the pantry at once, but I felt averse to be precipitate ; perhaps (upon finding nothing to steal) this poor wretch would feel remorse for what he had done and go away. It would be a wicked thing to deprive him of the opportunity of repentance. Moreover, it struck me that he might not be a thief after all, but only a cousin (considerably 'removed') of one of the maid-servants. It would have been very wrong of her to have let him into the house at such an hour, but it was just possible that she had done so, and that he was at that moment

supping in the kitchen upon certain cold grouse which I knew were in the larder. Such a state of things, I repeat, would have been reprehensible, but I most sincerely hoped that it had occurred. A clandestine attachment, however misplaced, is better than burglary with possible violence. Coughing rather loudly, to give the gentleman notice that I was about, and to suggest that he had better take himself off in my temporary absence, I went up to the attics to make enquiries.

And here I am tempted to a digression concerning the excessive somnolency of female domestics. As regards our own, at least, they reminded me, except in number, of the Seven Sleepers. I knocked at their door about a quarter of an hour before attracting their attention, and it took me another quarter to convince them (through the keyhole) that it was not fire. If it had been, they must all have been burnt in their beds. Relieved upon this point, they were scarcely less excited and 'put out' by the communication I was compelled to make to them, though conveyed with the utmost delicacy and refinement of which language is capable. I asked them whether by any accident one of them chanced to have a male relative who wore exceptionally thick hightows; and if he was likely to have called recently—that very evening, for example.

They all replied in indignant chorus that they had never heard of such a thing—by which they meant the suggestion; and that no cousins of theirs ever did wear hightows, being all females without exception.

Satisfied as to this (and greatly disappointed), I felt that it was now incumbent upon me to pursue my researches. Candle in hand and pistol in pocket, I therefore explored the pantry. To my great relief, it was empty. Was it possible that the thief had departed? If so, he had gone without his hightows, for there they stood on the vestibule table as large as life, and, from the necessity of the case, a size or two larger. Their build and bulk, indeed, impressed me more than ever. Was it possible that only one burglar had come in those boots?

I entered the kitchen: not a mouse was stirring; on the other hand, there was a legion of blackbeetles, who scuttled away in all directions except one. They avoided the dresser—beneath which lay the gentleman I was looking for, curled up in a space much too small for him, but affecting to be asleep. Indeed, though previously I had not even heard him breathe, no sooner did the light from my candle fall upon him than he began to snore stertorously. I felt at once that this was to give me the idea of the slumber that follows honest toil. I knew before he spoke that he was going

to tell me how, tired and exhausted, he had taken shelter under my roof, with no other object (however suspicious might be the circumstances of his position) than a night's rest, of which he stood in urgent need.

'Don't shoot, sir,' he said, for I took care to let the handle of Edward John's pistol protrude from my dressing-gown. 'I am poor, but honest; I only came in here for the warmth and to have a snooze.'

'How did you get in?' I enquired sternly.

'I just prised up the washus winder,' was his plaintive reply, 'and laid down 'ere.'

'Then, you put out your boots in the back hall to be cleaned in the morning, I suppose?'

At this he grinned a dreadful grin. It seemed to say, 'As you have the whip-hand of me, you may be as humorous as you please; but if it was not for that pistol, my fine friend, you would be laughing on the other side of your mouth, I reckon.'

'Come, march,' said I. 'Put on your boots.'

He got up as a wild beast rises from his lair, and slouched before me into the hall.

Though he looked exceedingly wicked, I felt grateful to him for going so peaceably, and was moved to compassion.

'Were you really in want, that you came here?' I said. 'Are you hungry?'

'Not now,' he answered with a leer.

Of course he was intimating that he had supped at my expense, and at the time I thought it frank of him to acknowledge it. If I had known then, as I learnt afterwards, that he had eaten a grouse and a half, and the whole contents of a large jar of Devonshire cream which we had just received as a present, I should have thought it mere impudence. I did think it rather impudent when he said as he stood at the front door, which I had opened for his exit:

'Won't you give me half-a-crown, sir, to put me in an honest way of business?' But nevertheless, thinking it better to part good friends, I gave him what he asked for. He spit upon the coin 'for luck,' as he was good enough to explain, and also perhaps as a substitute for thanks, since he omitted to give me any, and slouched down the gravel sweep and out of the gate.

It was three o'clock; the mist had begun to clear, and the moon and stars were shining. A sort of holy calm began to pervade me. I felt that I had done a good action and also got rid of a very dangerous individual, and that it was high time that I should go to bed in peace with all men. My wife, however, who

had been roused by the servants, was on the tip-toe of expectation to hear all that had taken place, and of course I had to tell her. I described each thrilling incident with such dramatic force that she averred that nothing would ever induce her in my absence to sleep in the house again. This was perhaps but the just punishment for a trifle of exaggeration in the narrative with which I had here and there indulged myself, but it was very unfortunate. Now and then I find myself detained in town, after dining at the club, by circumstances over which I have no control (such as a rubber at whist, which will sometimes stretch like *indiarubber*), and hitherto I had only had to telegraph in the afternoon to express my regret that there was a possibility of my non-return. Here was an end to all this, unless I could reassure her. I therefore began to dwell upon the unlikelihood of a second burglar ever visiting the house, which I compared with that famous hole made by a cannon-ball, said to be a place of security from cannon-balls for evermore.

'Oh, don't tell me,' cried my wife, with just a trace of impatient irritation in her voice. 'Hark! goodness gracious, what is that coming along the road?'

She thought it was a burglar on horseback, whereas, if I may so express it, it was the very contrary—namely, the horse patrol.

'Knock at the window; call him in. I insist upon your seeing him,' she exclaimed. I had no alternative, since she said 'insist,' (as any married man will understand), but to accede to her wishes; so I went out and told the patrol what had happened.

'How long ago was the fellow here, sir?' he enquired.

'More than an hour. It is quite out of the question you can overtake him. And besides, I really think he is repentant, and means for the future to lead an honest life.'

'You do, do you?' said the patrol, in that sort of compassionate tone of voice in which the visitor of a lunatic asylum addresses an inmate warranted harmless. 'Well, as I am here, I'll just go over the house and make sure there is no more of them. It is not impossible, you see, he may have left a pal behind him.'

'There was only one pair of boots,' said I confidently; 'of that I am certain.'

Nevertheless, as I felt it would be a satisfaction to my wife, I acceded to his request. He tied his horse to the scraper, and came in with his lantern, and looked about him. There was nobody in the front hall, of course, for I had just come through it; in the drawing-room nobody, in the vestibule nobody—but on the table where they had stood before stood a pair of gigantic navvy's boots.

‘What d’ye think of that?’ whispered the patrol, pointing to one of them.

‘They’re the same,’ I answered in hushed amazement, ‘they’re the very same. I could swear to them among a thousand. What can it mean?’

‘Well, it means that the gentleman who was going to lead a new life,’ he answered drily, ‘has thought better of it and has come back again.’

And so he had. We found him lying in the very same place under the dresser, awaiting, I suppose, events.

‘O lor, is that you, Mr. Policeman?’ he said complainingly. ‘Then, it’s all up.’

If he had had to deal with me alone, he expected perhaps to have got another half-crown out of me. But the great probability was, he had doubtless argued, that all suspicion of burglars, for that night at least, would have died out, and that he would have had the undisputed range of the house. It was a bold game, but one in which all the chances seemed to be on his side.

I helped to fasten a strong strap to his wrist, which was already attached to that of the horse patrol’s. ‘And now,’ said the latter coolly, ‘we will go and put on our boots.’

For the second time that night I saw that operation accomplished by my burglar, for the second time saw him walk off, though on this occasion a captive to his mounted companion. I did not wish, as the judges say when they put on the black cap, to add poignancy to the feelings of this unhappy man (he was on ticket of leave, and presently got five years’ penal servitude), but I could not help saying :

‘I think you ought to have been content with your supper and half-crown, and not come *here* again, at all events, in search of plunder.’

This argument, it seemed, had no sort of weight with him; gratitude was unknown to that savage breast. Like many more civilised individuals, he attributed his misfortunes to his own virtue.

‘No, sir, it ain’t that,’ he answered scornfully. ‘I’m the victim of Perseverance.’

JAMES PAYN.

Mr. Gilbert as a Dramatist.

THE publication of Mr. W. S. Gilbert's 'Original Plays,' in the form of two volumes of the 'Mayfair Library,' is, I think, a circumstance upon which the English reader, whether he is a playgoer or not, is much to be congratulated. And this is so, to begin with, because, on the whole, the works of the dramatists of this generation are not particularly accessible to the public. You can buy the plays of Sheridan Knowles and Douglas Jerrold, but neither of those writers can be regarded as belonging to this era, though Jerrold died so late as 1857 and Knowles so late as 1862. The 'Extravaganzas' of Planché have also been put within the reach of the present-day public; but he, too, must be ranked virtually with the dramatic lights of 'a day that is dead.' Indeed, of recent playwrights, I only know of one who has, up to this time, put a collection of his performances before the ordinary, everyday purchaser: I mean the late Tom Taylor, whose volume of 'Historical Dramas'—including 'Clancarty,' 'Jeanne Darc,' 'Twixt Axe and Crown,' 'The Fool's Revenge,' 'Arkwright's Wife,' 'Anne Boleyn,' and 'Plot and Passion'—appeared in 1877. To be sure, Dr. Westland Marston's 'Dramatic Works' were published in 1876, and the dramas of Mr. Browning and Sir Henry Taylor have been long before the world. But these three writers, dramatic as is much of their work and poetic as it all is, can scarcely be included among the practical dramatists of the time. Mr. Tennyson, again, has secured representation for three of his plays, but of these only one—'Queen Mary'—has been submitted to the verdict of the reader as well as of the playgoer. And as for such writers as Mr. H. J. Byron, Mr. F. C. Burnand, Mr. J. Albery, Mr. G. R. Sims, Mr. F. W. Broughton, Mr. Theyre Smith, Mr. W. G. Wills, Mr. Charles Reade, and Mr. H. A. Jones,—though they allow separate efforts of theirs to be obtained in the form of 'acting editions,' not one of them has come forward with a collected edition of his works—a circumstance all the more to be regretted, because we know that the majority of their productions would read as well in the study as they sound upon the stage.

So far, then, Mr. Gilbert would appear to be the only living working dramatist who has challenged attention by the publication of his leading plays. And how thoroughly justified he has been in so doing, I need scarcely say. If it can be said of the dialogue

of Messrs. Byron and Burnand, of Messrs. Wills and Reade, that it does not depend by any means wholly for effect upon the actors uttering it, assuredly that can be said, too, of the dialogue of Mr. Gilbert. The success of Mr. Gilbert's works has certainly not been owing solely to their dramatic qualities. There are plays which it is very agreeable to witness in performance, but which are exceedingly tedious to read. Get hold of the MS. of any ordinary *comediatta*, or, for that matter, of any ordinary drama, and you will probably be astounded at the baldness of the talk which, on the boards, has seemed so terse and vigorous. The fact is, it is possible to put together stage-work which, excellent dramatically, shall be worthless in a literary sense; and I am bound to say that very much of the play-writing of the present day is of this description. It furnishes good acting plays, but wretched works for the study. These pieces have their vogue, and sometimes a very brilliant one, but the time comes when they must needs sink into oblivion. With the majority of Mr. Gilbert's plays, however, this is certainly not the case. The author of '*Pygmalion and Galatea*' is not a prolific writer. His dramas cannot, like those of others, be numbered by the hundred; nor does his name figure so frequently as that of others upon theatrical programmes. He has attached his signature, I should say, to not more than twenty pieces altogether. Yet what is the result? There are a few of his productions—such as '*Tom Cobb*' and '*Engaged*'—which may be expected to die a comparatively early death, but of the remainder it may safely be asserted that, even if some of them have been dramatic failures—from the point of view of popular acclaim—all of them are worthy of preservation on account of their literary value. '*Dan'l Druce*', '*Broken Hearts*', and '*Gretchen*' are, I suppose, the least frequently acted of all Mr. Gilbert's works; yet it is precisely in these that the writing—regarded as mere writing—is the finest. It is, indeed, one of Mr. Gilbert's strongest claims to high rank as a dramatist that he should have bestowed such pains, not only upon the *scenario*, but upon the minute workmanship of his plays. Those plays may or may not always hit the popular taste, they may or may not be invariably destined for a dramatic immortality; but even in the least popular and least permanent of them, we are conscious of the presence of the literary artist,—of one who is not content with simply pouring out his wealth of wit and humour, satire and sarcasm, piquancy and pathos, but who is careful to present it in the most nearly perfect form which he is able to communicate to it,—who is not satisfied until he has given to his work the greatest measure of finish and of polish possible.

The extreme neatness of Mr. Gilbert's prose dialogue is, I suppose, universally acknowledged; certainly, it is universally felt. Its effects are realised, even though the means adopted are not invariably detected by the ordinary careless auditor. Thus: 'The working man,' says Aline in 'The Sorcerer,' 'is the true Intelligence, after all!' 'He is a noble creature,' replies Alexis, 'when he is quite sober.' And the quip is at once lustily applauded, even by those who are not conscious of the skill expended on its presentation. So, too, with the Sorcerer's tribute to his 'penny curse'—'one of the cheapest things in trade,' and 'considered infallible:':—

We have some very superior blessings, too, but they're very little asked for. We've only sold one since Christmas—to a gentleman who bought it to send to his mother-in-law—but it turned out that he was afflicted in the head, and it's been returned on our hands. But our sale of penny curses, especially on Saturday nights, is tremendous.

Nothing could be better than this admirably fresh treatment of old topics of satire. How happy, too, is Ralph Rackstraw's description of his mingled aspirations and sensations:—

Ralph. I am poor in the essence of happiness, lady—rich only in never-ending unrest. In me there meet a combination of antithetical elements which are at eternal war with one another. Driven hither by objective influences—thither by subjective emotions—wafted one moment into blazing day by mocking hope—plunged the next into the Cimmerian darkness of tangible despair, I am but a living ganglion of irreconcilable antagonisms. I hope I make myself clear, lady?

Josephine. Perfectly. (*Aside*) His simple eloquence goes to my heart.

If, however, we want to see Mr. Gilbert's prose dialogue at its brightest and keenest, I think we should go to 'The Pirates of Penzance.' The libretto of 'Patience' is very brilliantly written—perhaps, in one sense, the most brilliantly of all the comic operas of Mr. Gilbert, the songs being especially skilful both in form and substance. But in 'The Pirates,' the dialogue, whilst not less brilliant than in 'Patience,' has the merit of being considerably more varied in tone, and has the advantage, therefore, of being more thoroughly and permanently agreeable. When the Pirate King declares that, 'contrasted with respectability,' his profession is 'comparatively honest'; when Ruth asserts that, so far from her being 'a wife of seventeen,' Frederick will find her 'a wife of a thousand'; and when the Major-General puts forward his claim to the ancestors whom he has bought along with his estates,—it is impossible not to recognise the peculiar charm of such writing. Mr. Gilbert's ingenuity, however, is seen perhaps most clearly in such a passage as the following, where the whole effect of the

misunderstanding depends upon the proper succession of the verbal turns. Let any one try to repeat it from memory, and he will realise how essential is the collocation of words which the dramatist has so cleverly contrived :—

General. I ask you, have you ever known what it is to be an orphan?

King. Often!

Gen. Yes, orphan. Have you ever known what it is to be one?

King. I say, often.

All (*disgusted*). Often, often, often (*turning away*).

Gen. I don't think we quite understand one another. I ask you, have you ever known what it is to be an orphan, and you say 'orphan.' As I understand you, you are merely repeating the word 'orphan' to show you understand me.

King. I didn't repeat the word often.

Gen. Pardon me, you did indeed.

King. I only repeated it once.

Gen. True, but you repeated it.

King. But not often.

Gen. Stop. I think I see where we are getting confused. When you said 'orphan,' did you mean 'orphan'—a person who has lost his parents; or 'often'—frequently?

King. Ah, I beg pardon, I see what you mean—frequently.

Gen. Ah, you said often—frequently.

King. No, only once.

Gen. (*irritated*). Exactly. You said often, frequently, only once.

To be sure, this is only a reminiscence and extension of the 'filter'- 'philtre' passage in 'The Sorcerer,' and it is altogether rather whimsicality than wit. Nevertheless, the remarkable skill bestowed on it will not be denied; and certainly it would be difficult to select a passage more thoroughly Gilbertian.

When we come to consider Mr. Gilbert's verse-production, we are once more impressed with the exceptional care and skill bestowed upon the work. Here are no mere words 'written for music,' and not intended to be heard or understood. Here is no mere jingle of rhymes, put together with the fatal facility of the popular song-writer. Admirable as is the dialogue in the comic operas, it is only fair to say that the songs, choruses, and recitatives by which it is varied are not in the least degree inferior from the literary point of view. Such smoothness of metre, such dexterity of rhyming, and withal such delightful fun and sarcasm, are only too rare among us. Perhaps Mr. Gilbert was never more successful in this way than in his latest comic opera, where, in the Colonel's song, he has met Planché on his own ground and excelled him, and where, in Bunthorne's chief ditty, he has described once for all the *cultus* of the æsthetic-brotherhood. There could hardly be anything better in their way than the duet between Grosvenor and Patience, the duet between Bunthorne and Lady Jane, and

the songs sung by Grosvenor and Lady Jane respectively. The 'Silver Churn' is a particularly clever lyric, whilst, in the duet between Grosvenor and Bunthorne, Mr. Gilbert has popularised a metrical form which has already been imitated everywhere. We are for ever meeting now with verses modelled on—

A pallid and thin young man—
A haggard and lank young man—
A greenery-gallery, Grosvenor-gallery,
Foot-in-the-grave young man !

Assuredly Mr. Gilbert has written and can write nothing more popular than this; and I doubt if he has written anything more 'consummate'—though we all know and admire the ingenuity of the Sorcerer's and Major-General's songs, the ingenuousness of the First Lord's and Sergeant of Police's ditties, and the merits of more other *morceaux* than I have space to mention. Perhaps the value of Mr. Gilbert's work in this direction is best gauged when it is compared with that of the ordinary comic verse-writing of the day, and especially when it is compared with that of the productions of Mr. Gilbert's imitators. It may be comparatively easy to assume Mr. Gilbert's point of view, but it is not so easy to imitate his peculiar knack of style and of expression. Of course, the germ of all Mr. Gilbert's comic operas is to be found in the success of 'Trial by Jury,' which revealed to writer and composer the mine of fun and melody that they could work together. And, even at this distance of time, it is impossible not to admire the *naïveté* of the Judge's song—parent of all such frank soliloquies—and the quaint apology of the genial Defendant, whose plausible utterances read as smoothly now as ever they did :—

You cannot eat breakfast all day,
Nor is it the act of a sinner,
When breakfast is taken away,
To turn your attention to dinner ;
And it's not in the range of belief
That you could hold him as a glutton,
Who, when he is tired of beef,
Determines to tackle the mutton.
But this I am ready to say,
If it will appease their sorrow,
I'll marry one lady to-day,
And I'll marry the other to-morrow.

Having regard, indeed, to the work both of author and composer, 'Trial by Jury' is without doubt the most admirable thing of the kind ever written.

Leaving, however, Mr. Gilbert's comic work on one side, we

come to his more serious productions, such as 'Pygmalion and Galatea,' 'The Wicked World,' 'The Palace of Truth,' 'The Princess,' 'Broken Hearts,' and 'Gretchen,' all of which are written in blank verse, and in blank verse of a kind peculiarly Mr. Gilbert's own—aiming, in most of these works, at reaching nothing higher than the conversational pitch, but rising at times to heights of sentiment and indignation; whilst in the case of 'Broken Hearts' and 'Gretchen,' the level maintained is very high throughout. With the more colloquial passages in these plays I do not now propose to deal. My purpose is rather to illustrate the excellence of Mr. Gilbert's style, which justifies him in offering these works to the reader as well as to the playgoer, and which will cause his plays to be remembered long after less careful literary works have gone their way. Take, for example, 'The Wicked World,' in which the writing is particularly ambitious. Here, in one vein, we have Selene's description of some of the chief vices of mankind:—

There's vanity—a quaint, fantastic vice,
 Whereby a mortal takes much credit for
 The beauty of his face and form, and claims
 As much applause for loveliness as though
 He had designed himself! Then jealousy—
 A universal passion—one that claims
 An absolute monopoly of love,
 Based on the reasonable principle
 That no one merits other people's love
 So much as—every soul on earth by turns!
 Envy—that grieves at other men's success,
 As though success, however placed, were not
 A contribution to one common fund!
 Ambition, too, the vice of clever men
 Who seek to rise at others' cost, nor heed
 Whose wings they cripple, so that they may soar.
 Malice—the helpless vice of helpless fools,
 Who as they cannot rise, hold others down,
 That they, by contrast, may appear to soar.
 Hatred and avarice, untruthfulness,
 Murder and rapine, theft, profanity—
 Sins so incredible, so mean, so vast,
 Our nature stands appalled when it attempts
 To grasp their terrible significance.

Then, in another vein, we have Selene's description of love among the human race:—

Their love bears the relation to our own
 That the fierce beauty of the noonday sun
 Bears to the calm of a soft summer's eve.
 It nerves the wearied mortal with hot life,

And bathes his soul in hazy happiness.
 The richest man is poor who hath it not,
 And he who hath it laughs at poverty
 It hath no conqueror. When death himself
 Has worked his very worst, this love of theirs
 Lives still upon the loved one's memory.
 It is a strange enchantment, which invests
 The most unlovely things with loveliness.
 The maiden, fascinated by the spell,
 Sees everything as she would have it be :
 Her squalid cot becomes a princely home ;
 Its stunted shrubs are groves of stately elms ;
 The weedy brook that trickles past her door
 Is a broad river fringed with drooping trees ;
 And of all marvels the most marvellous,
 The coarse unholy man who rules her love
 Is a bright being—pure as we are pure :
 Wise in his folly, blameless in his sin ;
 The incarnation of a perfect soul ;
 A great and ever-glorious demi-god !

Here, again, is a characteristic passage, put into the mouth of Lutin. ‘I love,’ says Neodie, ‘a homely face.’ To which Lutin :—

I quite agree with you.
 What do a dozen handsome men imply ?
 A dozen faces cast in the same mould,
 A dozen mouths all lip for lip the same,
 A dozen noses all of equal length.
 But take twelve plain men, and the element
 Of picturesque variety steps in,
 You get at once unlooked-for hill and dale—
 Odd curves and unexpected points of light,
 Pleasant surprises—quaintly broken lines ;
 All very pleasant, whether seen upon
 The face of nature or the face of man.

In ‘Broken Hearts’ there are passages of considerable pathos and beauty, from among which I select Hilda’s confession of her love :—

For I have loved, as women love but once !
 He was a prince—a brave, God-fearing knight—
 The very pink and bloom of Chivalry,
 Proud as a war-horse—fair as the dawn of day—
 Staunch as a Woman—tender as a Man !
 He knew not that I loved him. Who was I
 That he should mark the flushing of *my* face,
 Amid a thousand maids whose stricken hearts
 Danced to their lips as he, my prince, rode by ?
 One sullen winter day—dark as his doom,
 He left his home to seek a distant land.
 A weary while I wept—months passed away,
 And yet no tidings came. Then tales were told

Of ships o'erwhelmed by boistrous wintry seas !
 And rough men prayed, and maidens wept aloud,
 For he was loved of all. Then came the news ;
 At first in shuddering whispers, one by one—
 Then babbled by ten thousand clamorous tongues—
 The fierce cold sea had robbed me of my love !

Here, again, from ‘Gretchen,’ are a few lines of very vigorous description, in which Gottfried tells how he came to win his captaincy :—

We were at rest around a big camp fire,
 Dreaming, maybe, of loved ones far away,
 When came a sudden trumpet-call—To horse !
 Another moment saw us in the saddle,
 And tearing on—we knew not why nor whither.
 Then came a shock of strong men breast to breast--
 A clash of swords—a hurricane of blows—
 I, on my back, half blind with blood and rage,
 A thousand devils dancing in my eyes,
 And friends and foes in wild entanglement,
 All tussling for my body—then, a wrench—
 A mighty shout—another rush, and lo,
 A panting dozen of us on a hill,
 Besmirched with blood and dust, and all agog
 To grasp my hand and hail me as a hero !
 That's all I know of it, except that I
 Went in a trooper and came out a captain !

Passages like these will probably be a revelation to those—surely not a numerous body—who think of Mr. Gilbert mainly as a comic writer, and forget how much higher, though not necessarily better, work he has done in other departments of the drama. At least, they testify at once to Mr. Gilbert’s versatility and to his never-failing mastery of style. They show that, effective as is his work upon the stage, it is no less worth perusal in the study, and has therefore a double chance of escaping that unhappy doom which ‘sullen Lethe rolls’ upon so much of the production of this nineteenth century.

High literary merit, however, is by no means the only one that Mr. Gilbert can lay claim to for his dramatic work. For much of that work he can demand still more distinguished recognition. I have insisted mainly on the vigour and variety of Mr. Gilbert’s style, because it is that which makes the publication of his plays an act of justice to his powers. But Mr. Gilbert will be remembered for much more than neatness and facility of literary technique. He will be remembered as the introducer to the English stage of two species of dramatic work hitherto unknown to it in those special forms —namely, the fairy comedy and the comic opera, with which latter may be allied what may be called the species of eccentric comedy.

Under the head of fairy comedy we have 'Pygmalion and Galatea,' 'The Wicked World,' 'The Palace of Truth,' and 'Broken Hearts.' The first of these is called a 'mythological' comedy, but the introduction of the supernatural element in the vivification of Galatea, and in the curse wrought by Cynisca, practically brings it within the same range as the other pieces. And of three out of these four performances I do not think it is possible to speak too highly. 'The Wicked World' is admirably written, but it is, to my taste, a somewhat dreary and unpleasant play—both on account of its motive and of its standpoint—the motive being disagreeable, and the standpoint, in my opinion, defective. As a satire on the grosser forms of love the play is powerful, but the gloom is too entirely unrelieved. The higher forms of love should have been introduced to make the picture perfect. As it is, the picture is so one-sided as to be distorted, though it forms, undoubtedly, an effective warning against the temptations of overweening righteousness. On the other hand, how truly affecting is the pathos in 'Broken Hearts'! The motive here is so delicate that it requires equally delicate treatment at the hands of histrionic artists, and it is painful to think what might be made of it by incompetent and vulgar performers. But, adequately dealt with, the language and situations of the play are alike exquisitely tender. Mr. Gilbert has never written more pathetically, and the death of Vavir is one of the most touching things on the stage. Mousa, too, is one of the most virile of the dramatist's creations—suggestive, doubtless, of the Caliban of Shakespeare, but nevertheless sufficiently original in conception and in execution to be claimed as Mr. Gilbert's own. Then, as for 'The Palace of Truth' and 'Pygmalion and Galatea,' who does not recognise their value? The former embodies a felicitous idea, worked out with marvellous knowledge of the world and abounding cynical humour; whilst the latter is without exception the happiest stage-reproduction of a mythological story that has been seen of late. Nothing could be more ingenious and more delicate, more humorous and more pathetic, than the conception of the character of Galatea, whose final disappearance from the scene knocks irresistibly at the heart of the spectator. How good, too, are the comic scenes! They are easily vulgarised, no doubt, by bad performers, but that is no fault of the author.

Nor is it necessary to insist, at this time of day, upon the manifest originality of the comic operas. It would be difficult to name anything more thoroughly individual than the 'Palace of Truth,' for example, unless it were 'The Pirates of Penzance' and its congeners. If we had previously seen nothing like the one, we had certainly seen nothing like the other. Both were equally

removed from ordinary experience, and yet equally effective in their side-lights upon human life. Nothing could well be more grotesque in idea than the Sorcerer's love-philtre, or the apprenticeship of Frederick to the pirates, or the mysterious fascination exerted by the poet Grosvenor. Yet, how happily are these ideas made to reflect upon the follies of the stage and of society! What a successful satire is the 'Pinafore' upon the sham patriotism which is so rife among the lower class of Jingo! How brightly is the older melodrama touched off in 'The Pirates,' and how crushing is the *exposé* of mock æstheticism in 'Patience'! It is all so entirely *sui generis*. We may truly say, indeed, of Mr. Gilbert that in these two departments—of fairy comedy and comic opera—none but himself could be his parallel. For the eccentric comedies I cannot find so much to say. 'Tom Cobb' has always struck me as the weakest of Mr. Gilbert's efforts, and 'Engaged' is notoriously a failure. It is eminently clever—clever in idea, clever in dialogue, clever in situations; but the extravagance is overdone. We like to read it, but we do not care about it on the stage. The ingenuous frankness of the characters would be not only bearable but amusing, if 'Engaged' were a comic opera, lit up with songs, and still further brightened by Mr. Sullivan's music. But it cannot be accepted as comedy—not even as 'farcical' comedy. Eccentricity is the only word for it, and on the 'boards' we do not like it.

I come now finally to what may be called Mr. Gilbert's contributions to the 'legitimate' drama—to those instances in which, laying aside his peculiarly characteristic views, he has been willing to throw his ideas into the moulds common to the whole body of dramatists. I refer to his dramas, 'Dan'l Druce' and 'Gretchen,' and his comedies, 'Charity' and 'Sweetharts.' Of these the only really popular one is the last-named, the grace and the tenderness, and withal the cynicism, of which are, indeed, unsurpassable. It is, however, remarkable that the others have not greater vogue than they possess. 'Charity' is not an especially original work, but it is well written, it has an interesting plot, and there are at least two effective characters in it—those of Mrs. Vanbrugh and Ruth Tredgett. 'Gretchen,' too, has not, it seems to me, obtained the recognition it deserves. It certainly contains variations on the original Faust-legend which distressed the critics and possibly confused the public, but those variations strike one, as a rule, as inoffensive, if not positively interesting, and assuredly there ought to be no question about the literary value of the dialogue. On the whole, the play may be described as a distinctly powerful one,

and one which ought to succeed if adequately represented on the stage—a fate which it has not hitherto enjoyed. ‘Dan'l Druce, again, is a drama which many must be desirous to see again upon the stage. It is, I venture to say, both from the literary and from the dramatic point of view, the very best production of its author. There is only one unfortunate thing about it—the presence of but one female character in the piece. But that one character is charming, and, her solitariness apart, the play has no drawback whatever. The characters are all strongly marked: Dan'l, Reuben, and (to a minor degree) Sir Jasper are distinctly individual; and Reuben is, in many ways, a positive creation. There is a touch of Malvolio about him; but here, as in the case of Mouston, the originality of the character is sufficiently great to make it virtually Mr. Gilbert's. Then, the story is interesting; the evolution of character and plot is easy and effective; and the dialogue is a veritable *tour de force*. A stronger drama, in fact, has not been produced upon our boards within the last half-century.

Such, then, in brief, are the claims that I conceive Mr. Gilbert to have upon the attention and admiration both of the age and of posterity. If, in due time, Oblivion should insist upon it, we might perhaps yield to it, though not without regret, ‘The Wicked World,’ ‘The Princess,’ ‘Charity,’ ‘Princess Toto,’* ‘The Wedding March,’* ‘Creatures of Impulse,’* ‘Tom Cobb,’ ‘Engaged,’ and ‘Randall’s Thumb.’* These, whatever be their merits and whatever be their fate, are certainly in the second class of Mr. Gilbert's work. But, in the first class, we have ‘Pygmalion and Galatea,’ ‘The Palace of Truth,’ ‘Broken Hearts,’ ‘Dan'l Druce,’ ‘Gretchen,’ ‘Sweetharts,’ ‘The Sorcerer,’ ‘H.M.S. Pinafore,’ ‘The Pirates of Penzance,’ ‘Patience,’ and ‘Trial by Jury.’ If, on the basis of these, Mr. Gilbert does not go down to posterity, I do not know who will. To have invented two new species of dramatic writing; to have produced perfect specimens of both; to have written at least one perfect drama and one perfect comedy; and to have imparted perfect literary finish to one and all of his works—these ought to be sufficient to carry Mr. Gilbert's name as far as that of any dramatic author of the day.

W. DAVENPORT ADAMS.

* These, with ‘Patience,’ remain uncollected. Perhaps they may form the foundation of a future volume.

The Miller's Piece.

CHAPTER I.

SOMEWHERE on the great main highway going north-by-west from London, there lies a little town which once upon a time played a big part in English History. A great battle was fought in a meadow close by its now crumbling walls. A mile or two off, following the winding river past the park gates where the hounds meet, is the wreck of one of the chief cities of our Roman conquerors. So, what with bones and skulls ploughed up from the battle-field, and coins and fragments of earthenware vessels dug up from the grave of the dead-and-buried city, the museum at Battleborough (which is stuck in a back street, and fills some cheerless rooms approached by a naked wooden staircase) is not a bad place wherein to pass an idle hour.

Like all small country towns in peaceful England, Battleborough is from time to time rent from circumference to centre by the fiercest struggles heard of since the Capulets and the Montagues died out, and Venice found peace. Sometimes the *casus belli* is supplied by a new sewer, around the excavations of which the inhabitants range themselves under the banners provided by the two local papers. On one of these it is written that, the sewer completed, Battleborough will be the happiest and most healthful place in the world. The other declares that not only will the sewer, when finished, run in the wrong direction and poison everybody, but that no sewer is needed, and that the scheme is floated merely to put money into the purse of Mr. Councillor Higginbottom, or to gratify the boundless ambition of Alderman Dibble.

For many years Battleborough was the scene of a fearsome contest about a Market Hall, which ended in the erection of a building so enormous in extent and so imposing in appearance that it utterly swamps the little town, asserting itself from all possible points of view, dwarfing the Castle, the Grammar School, the Town Hall, and all the other public buildings with which antiquity has dowered Battleborough. Of course it is never full; and so far from paying, as promised, eight per cent. interest on the capital invested, it does not meet its current expenses. Indeed, the 'Battleborough Sentinel,' which wanted the Market Hall built higher up the street and from a rival set of plans, has not scrupled to print an article in which it says the Market Hall will in the end land the borough in serious financial difficulties. The

actual wording of the passage here paraphrased runs thus :—‘ This monstrous outcome of political rancour and municipal rottenness is hanging like a white elephant around the neck of the good old town, and will at no distant date sink it fifty fathoms deep in the shoals of the Bankruptcy Court.’

Mr. Josiah Smith, F.R.S.A., was musing on these matters one bright January afternoon as he sat at the open window of an old Battleborough hotel which looks down the High Street. The sun was flooding the broad street with a warm light to which the northern zone of the planet had not for many months been accustomed, and the shadows cast upon the pavement from the many-angled gables and roof-trees of the shops were something to walk in gratefully. A light wind was blowing from the south. A caged bird was singing somewhere from an open window. There was a faint scent of flowers from a bountiful dish of snowdrops and crocuses on Josiah’s table. It seemed as if a day from the coming spring had lost its way and dropped into the middle of January.

The High Street looked so sleepy and so peaceful, that if Josiah had not caught sight over the roofs of the houses of one of the ugly towers of the portentous Market Hall, he would have doubted whether any one ever spoke here in a voice above a whisper. There were at least as many as ten people in the street, but they moved about in a slow, noiseless manner, as if they too were shadows. There did not appear to be any customers in any of the shops, for the proprietors were standing at the doors of their several establishments looking dreamily at each other across the street. A man crossing the road with a bucket of water in either hand had stopped in the middle, and was apparently plunged in a brown study, in which, as far as possible disturbance from passing carts and carriages was concerned, he might have continued till sun-down.

Into this stillness suddenly strode a man who seemed of quite another race from that which peoples Battleborough. He came up the hill from the railway station, and of course might thence have come from anywhither, supposing he had reached Battleborough by rail. But his soiled boots and his mud-bespattered trousers showed that he had been walking, apparently a long distance, evidently through muddy lanes. The lithe straight figure with the swinging walk seemed very familiar to Josiah, and as the new-comer partly turned his head to look up at the window where the caged bird was singing, he saw with surprise that it was Frank Fisher.

Frank was an old schoolfellow whom Josiah had met in later years in London, where he was doing something more than studying for an artist. He was really selling his pictures, and seemed

on a fair way to competence if not to fame. This was a long time ago, nearly ten years, and in the meantime Josiah had lost sight of him. He disappeared from the particular point at which their circles met, and he had ceased to think of him, just as Frank would have ceased to think of Mr. Smith if that erudite person had finally disappeared in one of the excavations he was in the habit of superintending. They were both busy, and had other things to think of than old schoolfellows and disappearances which, if sudden, were not attractively mysterious.

Josiah asked about him once or twice when he found an opportunity, and received replies which pointed vaguely to the certainty that 'something had happened' in the country. Some said Frank was married, others that he had loved and lost; whilst some were of opinion that he had loved and had failed to win. Information was vague, but the impression was precise. Frank had not done very well, else why should he have left London? If he were married properly and desirably, he would of course have brought his wife to London, and built himself a house in the Queen Anne style at Hampstead, hampering himself in a respectable way with indebtedness to the builder.

Frank had chosen to go his own way, and it was at this moment leading him down the High Street at a rapid swinging pace, which caused the meditative tradesmen at their open doors slowly to turn their heads aside and gape at the phenomenon.

Josiah added to their perplexity and imparted something like an atmosphere of excitement to the street by presently rushing after Frank, catching him up just before he fell under the black shadow of the stupendous Market Hall. He was not quite so glad to see Josiah as that placid personage thought he should have been. But this feeling passed off in a moment. He had evidently debated in his own mind whether he should be friendly or forbidding. Old instincts prevailed, and Battleborough received another shock by the spectacle of two men violently shaking hands with each other, working away for their lives as if their arms were a pump and the house on fire.

Battleborough had had enough of excitement for one day, so Josiah suggested that if Frank were remaining in the town he had better come and stay at his hotel, where they could be as brisk as they pleased without bringing about fatal disturbance in the sleepy street.

Yes, Frank would stay in Battleborough. Such, indeed, had been his intention. He had arrived in the town at some dead hour of the night by the mail train going north. He had left his luggage at the station and then gone for a walk.

'An extraordinary proceeding, but I suppose none of the hotels were open.'

'I did not try,' he said, producing a pipe of German manufacture a few sizes smaller than the Market Hall. 'I know the parcel office was closed, and I left my traps with a porter, who, now I think of it, was probably a night man, and will not be discoverable till to-night, if indeed he has not appropriated the things.'

'But it is now three o'clock in the afternoon, and the train arrived, or at least was due, at three o'clock this morning. You must have had a nice long walk.'

'It was long, and if one is fond of the country it was nice. There and back it makes twenty-five miles, and as I breakfasted at eight and have had nothing since, perhaps you would not mind dining early.'

After dinner, Frank, whose friendship had been rather spasmodic than soothing, began to settle down into something more like his own manner. He once more produced out of his trousers pocket the huge wooden piece of architecture which he called a pipe—a thing with a bowl large enough to serve as a store for a week's reserve of tobacco for an ordinary man.

Josiah was anxious to learn something of Frank's history. But he already knew that he was not married. A man who has a pistol pocket made to his trousers, and where the free-born American carries a pistol thrusts the stem of his pipe, is not likely also to have a wife. It had an odd effect, and must have been uncomfortable, to have this gigantic pipe-head standing out by his thigh, the stem being disposed down the leg of his breeches. To Frank it seemed neither ludicrous nor inconvenient. It was handy when he wanted it (which he often did), and when he had finished he could stick it in there without the trouble of making too sure that the sod was quite extinguished.

In full confidence he told Josiah that he had had a good deal of trouble with his pipes before he thought of this device. He was always losing them by leaving them about, or was suddenly reminded that he had not lost them by a smell of burning and a discovery that his pocket was smouldering.

After all, it did not come to much what he told Josiah of his life during the past ten years. He had been abroad, he said, studying. He had spent a good deal of time in Germany, and had learnt to drink thin beer and talk a thick language. He had seen all the picture galleries between Dresden and Madrid, Antwerp and Florence. He had sketched in them all, selling his pictures on the spot just for what they would bring. Sufficient for the day

were the earnings thereof, and Frank—who, if he had only decently married, and embarked upon the Queen Anne house at Hampstead or St. John's Wood, would have speedily paid off the mortgage—probably had not at the present moment fifty pounds in hand. He had in his wanderings picked up a good deal of health, a little flesh, and much muscle. His twenty-five-mile walk after his night's journey in the train had apparently taken no more out of him than we suffer after adopting the great Johnsonian suggestion of taking a walk down Fleet Street. He was scarcely as yet in the prime of life, being, as nearly as Josiah knew, thirty-five years of age. His face had that odd characteristic sometimes noted, that whilst across the street or a few feet off you would think its owner younger than his age, when you came to sit by him and heard him talk, or watched him fall into a fit of meditation, he seemed at least ten years older.

Frank had evidently had trouble beyond those losses and partial conflagrations of which he spoke just now. It may have happened years ago. It may have been the cause of his going abroad; or it may have come to him in foreign lands. But whatever it was, or wherever it had chanced, the memory of it had evidently come back recently with acute pain.

He was as restless as if he had the toothache or suppressed gout. He ate his dinner voraciously, after campaigning fashion; to an acute observer, another indication of his recent mode of life. Ten years ago Frank was rather fastidious, and was always the pink of courtesy. He didn't eat with his knife now. But he ate in a hurry, gulping his meat down with mighty draughts out of a tankard of the size of which he spoke contemptuously.

Perhaps this country walk in the too early morning had merely been the outcome of this restlessness. It must have been a dreadful thing to Frank in his present mood to be shut up in a railway carriage for five hours. But, then, what was he doing at Battleborough, and would not a walk of something less than twenty-five miles and an absence of twelve hours have sufficed to soothe his restlessness? Josiah started on the track of this walk once or twice, but Frank always sheered off, grunting out between the whiffs of his portentous pipe references to foreign or not particularly relevant subjects.

Among other of his peculiarities, Frank did not appear to have any notion of going to bed. Midnight had sounded from the old church tower close by. A deeper stillness had fallen on the solitude of Battleborough. The waitress—thank Heaven, there was no male meddler about the coffee-room of this hotel!—had looked in once or twice and ostentatiously poked the fire or trimmed the

lamp. Then came the landlady, who wished to know what time the gentleman would have breakfast. After a pause she came in again and said good-night! They said good-night. She was gone. The lights were put out in the passage, and Frank and Josiah were probably the only people awake in Battleborough.

'I know this place very well,' Frank said, after a long pause, during which he had sat steadily staring at the fire and gradually disappearing amid a cloud of smoke. 'The first ten-pound note I ever earned was for a sketch I made of a butcher's shop with the proprietor standing at the door. You may have observed that the proprietors mostly do stand at the doors of the shops here. This one was so like Falstaff that I expect the gay old roysterer must have spent a little time at Battleborough either before or after the battle in which he took such a distinguished part. Of course it was the shop, not the butcher, that made the picture. A wonderful old place with an overhanging front, through which the supporting beams honestly showed themselves. I saw a building something like it at Fribourg, on the borders of the Black Forest.'

This was a promising opening, though the scent was now going a little wrong. If Frank once got into the Black Forest he would certainly lose himself.

'Did you paint anything else in Battleborough?' Josiah asked, with innocent intent to bring him back.

'Yes, I painted everything. The Castle, bits of the Grammar School, and the old church on the southern highway. That is one of the finest churches in this part of the country. It had a very good organ, and the singing was fair. But the sermon was lamentable, the poorest hash of dead and dry discourse, the thinnest of what Mr. Carlyle, if he went to church, would call "thrice-boiled colewort." It was a painful contrast, the grand old church, and in the pulpit this feeblest specimen of humanity. Here one literally found sermons in stones. It did me good to be amid the solemn stillness. It was perfect rest to sit there quiet and alone. It was well when the organ played; it was more than bearable when the choir sang some simple hymns of the style just then coming into repute. But when this sparrow-twittering from the pulpit began, I used to feel inclined to walk up the aisle to the pulpit and take out bodily the round little fat man with his full-moon face, whom a satiric stroke of fortune had ordained to talk of high things in this old church. How the people would have stared if they had seen me striding up the aisle, and how terrified the little man would have been! I could have done it quite easily,' he said, laughing quietly to himself and stretching out his two brawny arms; 'and I declare that more than once I have had

to walk out of the church lest the temptation should be too strong for me. He was a very good man, I believe, and had not the slightest notion that he was talking twaddle. He would have made an excellent draper, or would have shone in the grocery line. Or, if his tendency towards the Church was irresistible, he would have been a great comfort as deacon. But somehow or other he got his B.A. degree, and the Bishop, careless of the fact that he was contributing substantially towards the disestablishment of the Church, placed the poor man in this incongruous position.'

' Still, it would have been a little awkward if you had yielded to temptation. There is, as far as I know, no particular place in the Liturgy where you might have stopped him. Since you have been abroad there has been a Public Worship Act passed, which creates a *locus standi* for the Aggrieved Parishioner. But I do not think that the Act provides for a parishioner, however aggrieved, walking up the aisle to the pulpit, taking up the parson under his arm, and dropping him outside among the tombstones. Besides, though you may have been aggrieved, you were not, I suppose, a parishioner?'

The artful Josiah was pumping now.

' No, I was only staying here sketching. But I liked the place, and had some friends in the country close by, and so lingered on a good deal.'

' Did you sketch anything else?'

' Yes, I made a very good sketch of a Magistrate's Court in a little room off the Market Place. There was not much to be got out of the room. Four bare walls; for furniture, three chairs, a table, and a little space railed off in which men stood, charged with all sorts of crimes, from killing a rabbit to slaying a man. But I made very good portraits of the three sober, not to say stupid, men in the three chairs, and of the clerk taking down the evidence. This last was a back view. I got a sketch in profile of five reporters, three on one side and two on the other. This was a big case, you will understand, and there was quite a crowd of people surging about outside. But the room being so small, it was thought best to avoid invidiousness by keeping out the public altogether. Then there was a chuckle-headed policeman standing close at my right elbow. There were half-a-dozen more in the background, but I did not get them in.'

' I suppose you did the prisoner?'

' Yes, I think I did him pretty well too, though that was naturally the hardest job.'

Frank was talking in slow jerky tones, quite altered from the amused manner in which he had recalled his temptation in the

church. There did not seem anything particular in it, though it did cross Josiah's mind to ask how he had managed to get in where the public were not admitted.

But he went on, and when a pause came, Josiah had forgotten this question and asked instead, 'Did you work out the sketch?'

'No.'

'Have you got the sketch?'

'No, I could not bring it away.'

'How was that?'

'Well, you see, I did it with a black-lead pencil on the wall of the cell to which I was removed, after the three wise men in the three Windsor chairs had made up their minds to commit me for trial on a charge of wilful murder.'

Frank said this so quietly, without the slightest variation from the low, almost sleepy tone in which he had been speaking, that Josiah thought it was a joke.

'No,' he said, positively yawning as he rose and thrust the pipe-stem into its appointed receptacle. 'It is no joke. Ten years ago I was tried for wilful murder in this charming old town, and I suppose very narrowly escaped being hanged. So now, good-night. I will tell you all about it in the morning, if you care to know. But when a man has walked twenty-five miles, and only had eight pipes, he begins to feel in need of rest.'

Josiah began to suspect that much smoking had made Frank mad.

CHAPTER II.

JOSIAH came down to breakfast the next morning a little late, and with a general sensation of having taken in by the pores too much tobacco-smoke. He liked a cigar himself, but drew the line at a pipe the size of which suggests that the most convenient way to fill it would be with a pitchfork.

Frank was just the sort of fellow to smoke in the room before breakfast, and Josiah sniffed cautiously as he slipped into the room prepared to make protest against this barbaric habit. But the room was empty and the air fresh and pure. A bright fire burned in the grate, and the window was open, letting in the keen and sunlit morning air. As Frank had not yet come down, Josiah went out for a stroll through the High Street. Frank not having shown up when he returned, he went up to his room with the intent to rouse him. The door was open, and the room in

that condition of confusion that might have been expected after a night's tenancy by a man with such a pipe.

Josiah rang the coffee-room bell, and asked if the gentleman had breakfasted.

'Oh no, sir,' said the landlady, evidently glad to get rid of Frank on any terms. 'He would not have any breakfast, but paid his bill, and told me to tell you he had gone for a walk, and that you were not to wait breakfast for him, as he might be late.'

'Paid his bill! Why, I thought he was going to stay here for some days.'

'Well, I hope not, sir,' said the bristling landlady, permitting the long-pending storm to break forth. 'A gentleman who sits up till all hours of the night, and then smokes in his bedroom, walking about in his boots till the gentleman underneath can't get a wink of sleep, is more free nor welcome.'

Josiah felt that all this was a little hard on him. Life in Battleborough had been very pleasant till Frank burst in upon its silent scene. Josiah was exceedingly comfortable at the hotel, and was the object of several of those delicate attentions which landladies pay to quietly disposed gentlemen who go to bed at decent hours, and don't smoke in the coffee-room. He was getting on nicely with his great work on *Underground England*—which it may be desirable to explain has nothing to do with mines, but gives what Josiah trusts will be found an interesting account of archæological vestiges of the earlier denizens of these islands.

Josiah had rather meant to take Frank over the buried Roman city that lay at the gates of Battleborough. And now he was gone as mysteriously as he had come, and had left disorder and distrust behind him. What did the man mean by these mysterious pedestrian excursions? Josiah made up his mind to trouble no more about Frank. Friendship established at school and revived after an interval of ten years is a delicate flower, and is trodden under foot by walks of the kind which seemed to have such a peculiar fascination for Frank.

Josiah did not get on very well with his work, which required a cool head and undisturbed nerves. He was certain Frank would turn up again. It was impossible to sit down to write with the feeling of expectation that the silence would be broken by the sound of a heavy foot on the stairs, and that the faint scent of the crocuses would be smothered by the vile smell of a pipe.

Frank did not come. But the second morning after his departure there arrived a letter. It was dated 'The Mill, Ellendale, Wednesday morning,' and ran thus:—

'Dear Jack,—I did not mean to run away from you the other morning. But after I had had my tub I felt a strong walking fit on, and not being quite certain where it might lead me, I observed the precaution of paying my bill. I am glad I did so, for I have settled down here for a bit, and have taken seriously to sketching again. It is a charming place, and turns to me the face of an old friend. I used to stop here awhiles, ten years ago, and find little change, though people, like myself, are older.

'I have my old room at the Mill, and, what is better, there is a room on the same floor for you. As you are one of those wretched creatures with nerves, and have, on reading thus far, vividly pictured yourself lying awake through the night listening to the roar of the mill-stream flowing under your bed-room floor, I may as well dispel the pleasing illusion.

Sandy he belongs to the mill,
And the mill belongs to Sandy still;

but Sandy, or his forefathers, observed the wise precaution of erecting their house at a convenient distance from the mill.

'You will like to know this. But what is more to the point is the remarkable opportunity you will find here of adding a few particulars to "Underground England." I fancy that at one time Julius Cæsar or some other distinguished person of that epoch must have lived a few feet underneath the present level of Ellandale. However that be, the ploughmen here are always turning over cylindrical pottery, which I believe are the chimney-pots of the buried city.

'Come and dig it up, there's a good man, and for goodness' sake tell us who or what it is we are living over. I had a talk yesterday afternoon with old Medge's ploughman, whom I overheard using bad language about one of these things he had just turned up. He will have it they are old drain-pipes. But I am sure they are Roman chimney-pots, and you would, after very short and inexpensive inquiry, be able to settle the question whether the Romans used patent flues.

'You need not walk unless you like. You can take train from Battleborough, which will land you at Ribston, where I will be to meet you on the arrival of the train at three to-morrow afternoon. So no more at present from

'Yours truly,
'FRANK.'

It is probable that if Josiah had, untrammelled, taken his own way, he would have declined this invitation and stayed where he

was. He felt that the excitement into which he had been plunged ever since Frank, comet-like, had dashed across the orbit of his peaceful progress, was unhealthful both for body and mind. He was unable to concentrate his mind upon his work, and whereas under favourable circumstances he had added to his great work as much in a week as would make ten lines of print, he had done absolutely nothing for the last four days.

But this man Frank gave him no choice. He was like the centurion, saying to one Go, and he goeth, and to Josiah Come, 'and,' added Josiah, with a comical air of perplexity, 'he cometh. If he had only given me time to write and propose other arrangements! But he has fixed the hour, and the train, and the place; there is nothing left for me but to go.'

To do justice to Josiah's native shrewdness, the bait about the ancient Roman chimney-pots had not the slightest weight with him. He did not know whether Frank meant this for a low joke, but was sure that if he were in earnest it did not matter, since his ignorance on all that related to tesselated antiquity was appalling.

Frank was at the station to meet him on the following afternoon, and took his arrival quite as a matter of course. He seized hold of Josiah's modest valise, and with a hearty 'Come along, old man,' trudged off down the lane at a perfectly ridiculous pace. He seemed to be in high spirits, perhaps a little ostentatiously so, and talked on rapidly as they rattled along the measured mile that conveniently intervened between Ellendale and the railway station.

The railway station itself was one of those impostures to be found in various circumstances in divers parts of the country. A great landowner, the value of whose property was nearly doubled by the creation of the line, had been bribed out of opposition by a railway station being dropped in convenient proximity to his park gates—not too close to be noisy, not too far off to be inconvenient. A mile farther on the railroad skirted Ellendale, and that was the natural position for the station. But of course Josiah had to get out where the train stopped, and thence he, a little out of breath, walked on into the village at the heels of his companion.

'If you don't like Ellendale,' Frank said, 'you had better not say so in my company. I thought when I first saw it ten years ago that it was one of the most charming spots in England; and coming back to it now after seeing all the show places on the Continent, I think so still. There is not much of it, you know. A single street—if you can call it a street where the line is made by two or three houses. The road, I fancy, was here first, and was

probably made by one of your old Roman friends. The lawyer's house is built pretty even with the road, and the butcher's shop is not far out of the true line. But I cannot at the moment think of any other. The rest of the village is made up of houses which seem to have come down from heavens wearied of the monotony of miraculous showers of frogs. I have been told by an old friend of the Hill family—Sir Penny-Postage Hill, I mean—that that most useful man's father, who was a schoolmaster, was the object of much contempt among his kind because, when he came to build a school-house, he planned one in deviation from the line of the road. He had a good reason for this, however, having discovered that, if he did not too slavishly follow the road, he could build his house in exact coincidence with the cardinal points of the compass. I suppose he found some subtle comfort in this, though in an ordinary way the British householder is not so particular. In Ellendale this passion for astronomical precision as applied to house-architecture does not exist. When the wind is in the east they know a hawk from a handsaw without seeing how their own or their neighbour's house lies in relation to the North Pole. I stick therefore to the miraculous-shower theory, and of course when houses drop from the clouds in showers they must, you know, stand just where they happen to fall, and that's how Ellendale is made. Some of the houses turn their backs to the road; others give it the cold shoulder at an angle of forty-five degrees. Old Hargraves—that is the miller—lives in a house that suddenly crops up out of the middle of a field. There is no railing and no garden—at least, not close at hand. You walk out of the back door on to a field, and you come out of the front door also on to a field. About twenty yards off to the right there is a bit of kitchen garden. There is no reason why it should be there more than at the other side, or at the back, or at the front. I suppose old Hargraves's grandfather, or great-grandfather, happening to walk across the field with a spade in his hand, began to dig here, and so there is the garden to this day. The mill, as I promised you, is a field and a half off. On drowsy summer evenings I have sat by the open window at the cottage and heard the thud of the stream as it falls over the wheel, a noise that adds to the infinite peace of the place. If you like that sort of thing, it will help you to go to sleep at night. If you don't, you will never notice it.'

'Is he married—the miller?'

'No; I fancy he has been rather an odd chap—one of those fellows with a history, if we could only get at it.'

'Does he live by himself, then?'

'No, his niece is his housekeeper.'

'Ah!' said Josiah with some animation, as if he had just discovered a fragment of a mosaic of undoubted Roman origin. 'So there is a niece, is there?'

'Yes, and, what is even more remarkable, there was a nephew, but he is dead. Now, if you will be good enough to step into this field, we shall be at the house in three minutes. You will observe that there is no fence to get over. We just walk off the high road into the field, and there we are; and there I perceive standing at the door waiting to welcome you is the niece, the astonishing fact of whose existence has so greatly fluttered you.'

Josiah of course had not experienced that marvel at the mere existence of Miss Hargraves which it suited his companion to enlarge upon. He had, as any one can see, ventured upon a little badinage, meaning to imply, when he said, 'There is a niece?' 'Ah, ah! my good friend Frank, this is what brings you down to this out-of-the-way place, making you start off in the dead of the night for what you call a country walk!'

But Josiah in the hands of a strong man had no more actual possession of his own jokes than in the case of a burly footpad he would have had of his valise with its assortment of memoranda and fine linen. His little joke had evidently missed fire, and he was not the man to load again.

Moreover, he felt that a much bolder man than himself would not have been inclined to make little jokes about Miss Hargraves in that lady's presence. She was only a miller's niece, and lived in the middle of a field, probably with such society as is usually commanded from miller's households in happy England. Yet she had that quiet self-possession which is supposed to come exclusively from what is called good breeding. She had not many visitors in the course of a year, or even of ten years. Yet she was not a bit shy or reserved with Josiah, albeit Frank had told her he was a F.R.S.A., and had largely indulged in fable with regard to his universal fame and his memorable literary achievements. He must be a great man, though he did not look it, being much more embarrassed at the reception than was the miller's niece. To her he was a guest, a friend of an older friend, and as such he was straightway to be made at home.

This she set about doing with great success, though without perfect observance of form. Of course 'the man' should have taken Josiah's bag upstairs, and inducted him into his bedroom. But there was no 'man' at the cottage, the only personage in the establishment coming under that designation being old Bobbery, whose principal duties kept him at the mill, though he was available for an hour on specified days of the week, when he cleaned

the knives and the windows. ‘White-letter days,’ Frank used to call these, because Bobbery left behind him a trail of flour, as a snail marks its daily constitutional by a line of slime.

If Bobbery had happened to be there he would not have conducted the guest upstairs, a ceremony accomplished by Miss Hargraves and Frank, the former going first, Josiah in the middle, and Frank coming after, making believe that the valise was very heavy, and solemnly asseverating that it contained nothing but bricks or paving-stones, the proceeds of some midnight foray on a buried city.

Josiah was charmed with his bed-room, a little place with casement windows and window seats, and a little bed fluttering with white curtains. On a dish by the window were crocuses, larger and more sweet-smelling than those which had delighted him at Battleborough. Frank was not such a careless fellow as he seemed. He had noted Josiah’s crocuses, and the placid delight he took in their presence, and had dropped a hint which the miller’s niece was quick to take.

Josiah liked Ellendale with its angularity. He liked the view from his casement window, with the far-reaching expanse of brown earth and bare trees, full without showing it of promise that would presently blossom in the breath of spring. He liked his dainty chamber with its homespun linen, fragrant of lavender, and he decidedly liked the miller’s niece. He had known her only for ten minutes, but he came to the conclusion that she did everything well, lending to the commonest acts of daily life a grace all her own. He reckoned her age to be twenty-seven or twenty-eight, and would have wondered why she was not married if he had not felt sure that there was no one in Ellendale worthy of her.

She was not at the hour the guest had arrived what the female heads of households are accustomed to call ‘dressed.’ She had on only a plain black dress, for the better protection of which she wore an apron. But the apron was made after the fashion known as bib, and few things more ravishing had met the eyes of Josiah since he discovered that coin of the Emperor Hadrian which Tom Purvis, casting about for some means of giving pleasure to a valued friend, had purchased from a dealer and planted over-night under a cairn in Argyleshire, one summer when he and Josiah were having a little holiday at Oban.

The miller’s niece was not a beauty after the style that we photograph, and can purchase at a shilling each, with a reduction on taking a quantity. Yet when Josiah came to reckon up her features as he sat in his bed-room, he could not quite understand

how it was that she certainly failed in claiming such pre-eminence. Perhaps it was her mouth that was a little too large, though when it was open to laugh, as occasionally befell, it was filled with such pretty teeth that it seemed scarcely fair to complain that so full a view was obtained of them. She had soft brown eyes, surely made to laugh oftener than they did. Josiah did not permit himself to speculate as to what distance from her heels her hair might have reached if she had been thought worthy of being photographed with it combed out. But it was very abundant, its soft and glossy wealth being plainly brushed back from the forehead and brought up in a stupendous knot at the back of the head. Josiah was sure she had pretty hands, a little brown, but soft withal.

Perhaps she was not a beauty because she lacked assertion, either on the part of herself, or what is known in legal phraseology as her next friend. But she was a very pleasant presence in a house which could no more have gone on without her than the mill could have ground corn if the stream had suddenly run dry.

CHAPTER III.

THE miller came in to tea, and, though he smelt a little strongly of flour, was otherwise agreeable to the fastidious taste of Josiah. He talked incidentally about being sixty, but he shared with Frank the peculiarity of sometimes looking older. In fact, it might be more precise to say that he sometimes looked as young, his general appearance being that of a man who had reached three-score years and ten, and who already felt something of the labour and sorrow which the longer span brings with it. To look at him as he sat at his own table with thin white hair straggling to his shoulders, wrinkled face, lack-lustre eyes, and an air of absolute and hopeless dejection, one would have guessed his age as seventy-five. It was occasionally when his niece spoke to him that his aspect changed, and then momentarily came back to him the strength and cheerfulness which stand by sixty when a man has lived happily and is prosperous.

Josiah thought that this appearance was transitory, and was referable to something gone wrong in the milling business. Perhaps flour was up or down—he was not quite sure which movement might adversely affect a miller's business. Whichever it was, he concluded it had happened to Mr. Hargraves.

'The old gentleman seems in low spirits to-day,' Josiah observed to Frank.

It was night, and they were sitting in the room which served for breakfast, dinner, tea, and supper. At ten o'clock the miller,

his niece, and the whole establishment were accustomed to retire to rest, and half-an-hour later were probably asleep. Frank was not able to fall in with these pleasing manners, and was accustomed to sit up later in order to smoke a pipe. Josiah would rather have gone to bed, but his inclination was not of much consequence at any time, and none at all when in company with Frank Fisher. It seemed good to Frank to sit up late and smoke. He preferred to do it with company, and, willy nilly, Josiah sat up with him, getting his clothes odiously impregnated with tobacco smoke.

Of course he might have said he would rather go to bed. But it was a way of looking at things that never occurred to him. He peacefully yielded to a stronger will wherever met, and, all things considered, suffered wonderfully little whilst the ordeal lasted. He was the sort of man who makes himself a nuisance at the dinner-table by his total absence of preference. He had a constitutional aversion to rabbit, which taken in whatever small quantities made him seriously ill. Lunching one day with a friend, provision was made of roast mutton and stewed rabbit.

'Will you take a little mutton, or some rabbit?' said the host.

'Oh, anything, I don't mind,' said Josiah.

'A little mutton?'

'Well, yes,' said Josiah, secretly glad that the choice had fallen on this dish, but afraid to show too much elation, as after all the host might wish him to take rabbit.

'Or perhaps you would rather have rabbit?' said the hostess, noticing the hesitation.

'Thank you,' said the unhappy Josiah; and having the rabbit on his plate, he was bound to eat some of it, with direful consequences protracted over a fortnight.

That's the sort of man Josiah was, and that is how he now comes to be sitting up with this boisterous, burly, smoke-consuming Frank, instead of being, as he would have preferred, either quietly reading in his room or scenting the lavender between the sheets.

'A little low to-day, isn't he?' Josiah repeated apologetically, for Frank had not replied to his first remark, being overcome by one of those fits of staring steadily into the fire the while he puffed.

'He is much the same as usual, or as he has been any time these last ten years,' he answered presently.

'Oh!' said Josiah, 'I thought perhaps flour had gone up or down, or the boiler had burst at the mill, or something unpleasant had happened.'

'No, Josiah, we are somewhat advanced beyond that stage. At

the period of our history with which you are best acquainted they may have had boilers in water-mills, but in the present day they use the water cold. Nevertheless, it was at the mill that happened the events to which are traceable the old man's depression. I think I mentioned when we were at Battleborough a little circumstance which led to my making a sketch of some county magistrates and their court? It was here, or rather over at the mill yonder, that the murder took place. It was the old man's nephew who was foully put to death.'

'Miss Hargraves's brother?'

'Yes, Mary's brother.'

Frank said no more, but, with his chin sunk on his chest, sat slowly smoking and staring into the fire.

'I think I'll go to bed now,' said Josiah after a pause, rising and yawning in an engaging manner, designed to hide a growing state of nervousness. In Battleborough he had been consumed by a gentle desire to know all about the mystery that had affected these three lives. But he did not care to hear the story close upon midnight, within sight of the scene of the tragedy.

'Sit down, old man,' said Frank peremptorily; 'it's early yet, and I don't mind telling you now that you are here that I brought you down with a special object not fully revealed in my reference to the Roman chimney-pots. I may want you to do something. Don't look so uncomfortable. It may come to nothing, and at worst you will figure in it only as a looker-on—a credible witness, if witnesses be needed, which they may not be. Or perhaps I may be a stupid old fool.'

The cold sweat broke forth on Josiah's brow as he contemplated the situation. Here he was, against his inclination at the outset, in a lonely hamlet, with a man of strong will, and perhaps undeveloped tendencies to lunacy, who had a murder on his mind, and wanted Josiah to have something to do with it.

'I told you I found this place accidentally,' Frank said, taking no more notice of Josiah's perturbation than a snake bestows on the trembling of a rabbit on which it has fixed its glittering eye preparatory to munching its bones. 'I came down here sketching some of those quaint houses, and staying over at the little inn met the miller, who came down on summer evenings to play bowls. He asked me to his house, where I met Mary, then a girl of seventeen, and the fairest, freshest creature I ever met. I am not going to make a long story of it. It is the old old story, which you have doubtless already guessed. I fell in love with Mary, and dared to hope that she would come to London as my wife. It would be, from what I might surmise as her uncle's point of view,

a good match for her. I was already in that position which painters—and, for the matter of that, all other professional men—find so difficult to attain, and so easy to hold. I was getting big prices for my pictures, and saw myself already settled down in growing affluence on the verge of Hampstead Heath. What Mary would say when I told her what I supposed was a secret was a matter of such moment to me that I shrank from bringing the affair to a conclusion. I might have sat through a long summer afternoon—and will not say I have not—pulling daisies to pieces leaf by leaf, with Marguerite's refrain, and been just as wise and resolved when the stalk was bare as when I had plucked the daisy. "She loves me," I said in the morning; "she loves me not," I thought at noon. In the evening I fancied I was more to her than a casual guest, and when we parted at night I felt in her perfectly composed good-night, and in the cruelly frank pressure of her hand, that she loved me not. When I was in a hopeful frame I told myself we were playing at cross purposes, and that her reserve and affectation of a commonplace friendliness were simply the result of my too successful assumption of indifference to her. In darker moods I was sure that she was, in this as in all her life and actions, perfectly truthful, and precisely what she appeared to be.

'Her brother Jack was two years older than she; a handsome high-spirited lad, who fretted under the rule of his uncle that bound him to the hateful enterprise of the mill. He did not quite know what he wanted to be. But he had a very strong conviction that he was not meant to be a miller. Hargraves—who at that time was a very different man from what you find him now, being as obstinate as a pig and as self-willed as an ass—ruthlessly resisted these longings to be free. There had been a Hargraves miller at Ellendale as far back as record went. The present mill was built by our friend upstairs, and worked by him with substantial profit and universal credit. His sister, going outside the parish of Ellendale and hankering after better things, had married a gentleman, who had of course died leaving her in a state of destitution. The miller would not have her back in Ellendale. But he was careful that she should not absolutely starve in London, and when she died he himself went up to Camden Town, saw her decently buried, and brought down Jack and Mary, then aged respectively nine and seven. He meant to do his duty by them when he took them in hand, and he had done it. Both had had a first-class education and a comfortable home, which in these last months was daily growing in grace under the touches of Mary, now installed as housekeeper. Jack, the miller said, should have

the mill when he was gone, due provision being made for Mary. What could be fairer or kinder than this? As for Jack's repugnance to account-books and his abhorrence of the sight of sacks of flour, that was merely boyish ignorance.

'The miller,' added Frank severely, all unconscious that there was someone else in the room whom the cap might fit, 'was one of those people who, as they say, put their foot down, never doubting that, since they have taken the action, it must be put down in the right place. He put his foot down on the declaration that Jack should keep the accounts, collect the money, and have a settlement with his uncle every Saturday night. Jack yielded perforce, though it was evident he would take the first opportunity of breaking the hateful bonds.

'In the meantime he kept the accounts very badly, and the peace of Saturday evening was often broken by discussion between his uncle and himself, in which two hot tempers came into collision. I suppose Jack had been having a row with his uncle when he met me one Saturday afternoon strolling home with my sketch-book under my arm. He fiercely opened upon me with inquiry as to what I wanted making love to his sister. The inquiry, as indicating discovery of what I thought was a secret locked in my own breast, staggered me to such an extent that I only half heard the hot-blooded youth rattling on with wild remarks, and I was presently stupefied by receiving a blow in the face well planted between my eyes. This was Frank's peroration, his emphasis to the declaration that as long as he lived he would have no London gentleman prowling round his sister. Jack was a tall, well-made youth, though slight in build, and no more a match for me than—than—if I may say so without disrespect, you are at the present moment. We were not far from the cottage at the end of the field by the mill-stream, which, having done its work, here runs on in the full majesty of its broad channel full fourfeet deep. The lad's remarks about my intentions towards his sister did not hurt me, being childish and of course absolutely without foundation. But I could not quite stand the blow; so while the young champion was raging round, I took him by the heels and the collar, and dropped him into the stream. I knew he could not drown in that depth, and the cool water might do him good. Turning round after walking on some distance, I saw Jack scrambling out of the stream. I expect he was wild with passion, and he stood there shaking his fist at me and shouting something that I could not hear. That was the last I saw of him till on the following afternoon I helped to carry him, wounded to death, up to the little bed on which an hour or two later he breathed his last.'

'Hadn't he been seen from the time you parted with him till this happened ?'

'Oh yes, he went home, and when Mary, alarmed at his appearance, asked him what was the matter, he said he had fallen into the mill-stream. But he must have told his uncle about our encounter, for it was through him the news of it reached the sapient police. On the morning after this little affair Jack got up and, dressed in his Sunday best, as usual, went over to the mill to square up some accounts. His uncle came down and breakfasted by himself at half-past nine. At a quarter past ten he left the room and went over to the mill, returning to the house about a quarter of an hour later. I can remember these particulars, as they were of course set forward with great detail at the inquest. Mary, wondering where Jack could be so long, asked her uncle, had he seen him ? He said "No," asked Mary for his black coat and waistcoat, put them on in place of those he was wearing, and went to church. When he came from church Mary, increasing in marvel, asked him again if he had seen Jack, and again he said "No."

'They dined about one o'clock, and an hour later the old man, now himself getting a little anxious at the prolonged absence of his nephew, went out and called on a neighbour to help him to search for Jack. The two men went down to the mill-pond, and after a brief search concluded that Jack was not there, and separated, the miller returning to the house. Later in the afternoon the miller went to the mill to get a feed for the horse. Seeing blood on the mill floor and on the scoop, he concluded that the worst had happened, and once more calling in a neighbour, being himself too nervous to go in search, the men found poor old Jack at the bottom of the steps leading from the mill floor. He was lying partly on his face, his right arm doubled over his head. Near him was a stout stick covered at the top with blood. He was disfigured with wounds on the head, and, though still breathing, was evidently on the point of death. They carried him to the house. We carried him upstairs, where he presently died, without even a momentary return to sensibility.'

'The police being summoned, commenced in due form a search for "a clue." On the middle floor of the mill, where it was evident the murderous attack had commenced, the account-book which Jack had entered the mill to balance was found lying open. Up to the forty-third entry made in the new year, all were in Jack's handwriting. Two later entries had been made in the hand-writing of the miller himself. On the page headed "February 20, 1870," were spots of blood in two places smeared over, apparently in an attempt to wipe them off. There were spots of blood

on several of the pages, but they were smeared only on this particular page. Twelve or thirteen leaves were indented, as if they had been struck with some heavy pointed instrument. On the lower floor, nearer the place where Jack was found, the police picked up a mill-punch covered with blood. From the general appearance of the place all the witnesses examined at the inquest arrived at the conclusion that Jack had been on the middle floor engaged in making up his accounts when the attack had commenced, and that he had struggled with his assailant, who, overpowering him, had thrown him through the opening in the floor into the room below. There was some talk in the neighbourhood about these entries made in continuation of Jack's work, evidently done at some time subsequent to the moment at which he had been engaged with the books when broken in upon by his murderer. But the miller was able to explain the matter. "Sometimes," he said in reply to the coroner, "the deceased neglected to make entries in his account-book when he was in the habit of receiving money from me. He neglected to make two on Saturday, and I made them yesterday,"—that is to say, on the day following that of the murder of his nephew, when the blood on the leaves could scarcely be dry. But of course, painful as these circumstances are in a family, business must be attended to.

'It was after the first adjournment of the inquest that the police pounced upon me. Hargraves had, in a natural attempt to call to mind all circumstances in the recent history of his nephew, mentioned our quarrel of Saturday. To the mind of a country policeman the whole dark landscape was forthwith illuminated. We had quarrelled; he had struck me, and I—what had I done? Why, taken him up as easily as a child might be lifted, and had dropped him into the mill-stream. What could be clearer than that I had repeated this gymnastic performance in the mill, had taken him up and dropped him down the passage on to the lower floor? Accordingly, when I arrived post-haste at Ellendale, on reading the account of the murder in the newspapers, I found myself in the arms of old Bodkins, a good-natured pudding-headed policeman, with whom I had smoked many a pipe in quiet country lanes. He almost blubbered as he put the handcuffs on me, and was, I own, unfeignedly sorry. But, as he said, duty must be done, and the magistrate—on the whole, a denser personage than Bodkins himself—had signed a warrant for my arrest.

'I was taken off to Battleborough through a gaping crowd, who, forgetful of the interchange of many courtesies, were unanimously of the opinion that I was guilty. In fact, it turned out—what had never before been suspected—that my intermittent residence in

the village, and my lonely wanderings with a sketch-book in my hand, had resulted in a deeply seated and unanimous feeling that I was after no good ; and that I should be arrested on a charge of murder seemed to these good people quite a natural conclusion.

'I was brought up before the magistrates the next morning, when I made the sketch of which I told you. I was remanded for three days, which sufficed to bring to the knowledge of the police a circumstance which they might perhaps have learned earlier, if they had not shut their eyes, lowered their heads, and run at me bull-fashion. On the Saturday night, being myself a little upset with my quarrel with Jack, and desiring a few quiet moments to think the matter over, I had walked over to Battleborough, had slept at the Falstaff, had had my shaving water brought up at nine o'clock, had breakfasted at ten, had gone over to the old church for the eleven-o'clock service, which I had diligently sat throughout—though, if my deliverance had depended on my ability to say what the sermon was about, I should infallibly have been hanged. All this was as plain as day, and there remained nothing but for the police to release me, with many apologies from the gentlemen on the bench, and amid much rapturous blubbering on the part of Bodkins, who wanted to shake hands with me all across the Market Place. But I had had enough of the police and Battleborough, and even of Ellendale, which I saw no more till the morning I met you.

'I cannot say that I was incensed against the old man for the trouble to which he had put me. It was natural enough that, in his anxiety to clear up the whole matter, he should mention what Jack had told him about our fight, which, moreover, did not appear altogether without bearing upon what followed. What I was maddened at was the fact that this unfortunate setting of the police upon the wrong track lured them away from other pathways on which the scent of blood lay, and which might, perhaps, have led them to poor Jack's murderer. As it was, nothing was discovered then, or has been since. The murder has added another to those mysteries which crowd the pages of our criminal records, and Jack's young life is unavenged. I am not a vindictive man, I trust ; but I own I should like to place my hand on the shoulder of the murderer, with the old stern cry of the prophet, "Thou art the man!"'

Frank's pipe had gone out, and he sat with his chin sunk on his chest, staring into the fire, after a manner with which Josiah had of late grown familiar. But he had not before seen this resolute look on his face, in which there was something of anguish as if he were struggling between a hateful task and a call to duty.

'Look what he has done,' he added, after a pause, using the personal pronoun, that seemed to Josiah as if he had in his mind some particular personage. 'The blow, foully dealt, that killed that poor lad, also destroyed the happiness of two lives. I was certain from what Jack said to me that he had observed in Mary what confirmed my hopes, and that part of his anger with me was born of the conviction that I was trifling with affections already gained. I could not marry Mary with this horrible mystery hanging over the house; and as I could not live near her and not speak, I went away. What may seem to be the wreck of my own career is of no great matter. That is a fracture not too late to mend. But, whatever may happen, the other dream has gone for ever. I felt irresistibly drawn back here just now, for to-morrow it is ten years since this thing was done. I want to look about me a bit, meaning to take this matter up, and see it through, at whatever cost. That's what I am here for, Josiah, and now you know all about it, including the mystery of muddy boots and mysterious walks.'

'Yes,' said Josiah; 'but it does not explain why I am here.'

'I dare say you wish you were not. But the fact is, that I felt I must talk of this matter to some one, and Heaven seemed to have sent you at this particular crisis. You can listen and not talk, and moreover, I may want a witness. Now, good night; go to bed, and don't dream.'

Josiah went to bed because he was bidden, just as he had come down to Ellendale when commanded by this authoritative person with a pipe. But when he got to his bedroom it occurred to him that the best thing he could do would be to let himself down from the window and make for Battleborough. It was but twelve and a half miles, and he could send for his valise. He opened the window and looked out. The night was pitch-dark, save for the light of a few stars. The stray spring weather that had dropped down into this winter month seemed to be gone. The wind was blowing unchecked across the broad field, bringing with it flakes of snow. Josiah tried not to look over to the quarter where the mill stood. Naturally, therefore, he looked the more. He could just see the building, standing ghost-like against the waste beyond, and could hear the murmur of the stream. On the whole, he thought he had best stay where he was, and he got into bed with exceptional rapidity. But he would clear out in the morning, whatever Frank might say: with which mighty resolve he fell asleep, and dreamed that Jack was alternately dropping into the mill-stream and through the chasm in the mill-floor.

Nimbles Round Harrow.

IV.

A PLEASANT shady lane divides Cashiobury from Grove Park, which is situated about seven miles in a direct line from Harrow, on the Hemel Hempstead road, so that the many broad acres that are covered by the grounds of the two residences are almost contiguous. The lodge is at the corner of the lane, and no exception is taken to any one walking through to enjoy one of the most beautiful scenes that all the parks in this charming district can offer. The road slopes down to a bridge over the Colne which runs



Grove Park.

through the grounds, and herds of deer are either resting under the shade of beeches and elms, or gazing with surprised eyes at the passer-by. Perhaps the road that is spoken of is unsurpassed in beauty by any in either Cashiobury or Moor Park. The grounds of Grove Park are some three miles in circumference, and they enclose, among other objects of interest, a very successful farm, which was laid out and conducted with great sagacity by the great-uncle of the present proprietor when he enjoyed the estates and dignities. ‘The quantity of land which his lordship has now in cultivation includes about 600 acres, and, as the prevailing soil is a sharp gravel, the skill and industry necessary to render it productive must be of a superior description. On this farm about

100 acres are every year laid in artificial grasses, which remain for feeding and cutting for three years, in which time, from live stock—particularly sheep—being kept upon them, they are so well dressed that on breaking them up at the expiration of that period three good crops of corn are taken from them in succession, without any other dressing, providing the seasons are favourable. The rotation is generally oats, wheat, and barley; but this is sometimes varied by the introduction of peas. By pursuing this system, the other parts of the land can be dressed more highly, and a greater number of sheep is admitted to be kept.

'In the management of the sheep stock his lordship generally purchases the best Ryeland ewes that can be procured, about Michaelmas or sometimes sooner: to these a large-sized Leicester is added, and sometimes another, but always a well-shaped animal. The ewes commonly cost from twenty-five to twenty-seven shillings a head, the lamb sells for at least the prime cost of the ewe, and the ewe fattens at the same time, and both are sold within the year for not less than thirty shillings.'

'His lordship's stock of deer is generally from 350 to 400, and of these a few brace are annually fattened for sale.'

'Considerable attention is also given to poultry; and geese, turkeys, guinea-fowls, ducks, &c., are bred here in abundance. A complete carpenter's yard forms part of the farming establishment, and the whole is conducted with the greatest liberality and judgment.'

This is the account of a contemporary, and was written in the very early part of the present century, but it is a faithful comment upon what has been already said of the utility of private parks; and indeed the management of the farm as here described is a just picture of a well-conducted one, even with our present knowledge. But the glory of 'the Grove' is its picture gallery, which was in part brought away from Cornbury, the ancient seat of the Earls of Clarendon, and now the residence of Lord Churchill, who is some descendant of the great Marlborough, and whose family was raised to the peerage in 1815. On the walls of the Grove we see through suites of rooms men who have left their names and their mark in English history, and their lineaments are almost as vivid as they were when they were first portrayed. Vandyck, Lely, Carl Janssen, are all well represented here, and indeed this magnificent collection of portraits is almost as interesting to a picture-collector as to an historian. Of course the most interesting of all the portraits is that of the Lord Chancellor, from whom the present family derive their title, and who, as Granger says, 'was of too subtle a nature for the age of Charles the Second.'

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have been content to enslave millions, he might have been more a monarch than that unprincely king; but he did not only look upon himself as the guardian of the laws and liberties of his country, but had a pride in his nature that was above vice, and chose rather to be a victim himself than to sacrifice his integrity. He had only one part to act, and that was of an honest man, and he was a much greater, perhaps a happier, man, alone and in exile, than Charles II. upon his throne.' The portrait is a very noble one, and full of dignity. There are also other chancellors in the collection, such as Lord Cottington, who held the seals under Charles I., and Chancellor Wareham, who was Archbishop of Canterbury and Lord Chancellor at the same time—almost corresponding in kind with the prince-bishops of the Continent,—but the mixture of trusts was quite usual in the Middle Ages. It might be puzzling to the reader of Shakespeare to understand all at once the dialogue between Falstaff and the Lord Chief Justice which occurs in the Second Part of 'Henry IV.' Falstaff's ready wit is far too much for the Chief Justice, even though the latter was as able a man as Gascoigne; but when he says, 'Will your lordship lend me a thousand pounds to furnish me forth?' it would seem a most unreasonable request. A thousand pounds would equal at least fifteen times such a sum now, and, even if the security were all that Lombard Street could desire, a chief justice is not a money-lender. This was not, however, the plea for declining at all. 'Not a penny, not a penny, you are too impatient to bear crosses. Fare you well.' He could, however, quite easily have complied with Falstaff's request, as he had by virtue of his office the control of the resources of the Treasury.

The origin of the Chancellor's office forms also a natural subject for reflection as we look over the grand collection of portraits at the Grove, but it seems to be lost in puzzles. The Conqueror brought his chaplain with him into England and made him the head of a college of notaries, who seem also to have been the king's chaplains, and in his capacity of arch-chaplain the Chancellor became the keeper of the royal conscience and of the chapels royal; in his character of grand notary he became the keeper of the Great Seal, which was raised to the plural number, either out of compliment to the phraseology of France, or because William made it a double seal, with his equestrian figure on one side and his robed figure on the other.

Chancellor is a word of wide signification, and formerly denoted merely an usher or secretary to the imperial court, and, as we see, the Archbishop of Canterbury was frequently the Chancellor. Wareham's portrait (who held the double office) is preserved in

the collection. Finally, the Chancellorship was a law office, though Lord Clarendon declared when he became a politician he was obliged to relinquish law, and here again we are confronted with a pronounced difference between the selection of English judges and French. An English judge is an old advocate ; a French judge has for long been chosen early in life, and learns his duties in a different way. ‘The legal magistracy of France,’ as has well been remarked, ‘with its virtuous chancellors and courageous presidents, was one of the chief glories of the ancient monarchy. Their names are a line of light along French history ; and while no system can keep up a race of L’Hôpitals and D’Aguesseaus, it is more than mere good fortune to have produced them once.’

There is a fine portrait of Lord Keeper Coventry here. He was Lord Keeper of the Great Seal during the reign of Charles I., after having filled the offices of Recorder of London and Solicitor-General. This painting is by Cornelius Janssen. There are several very fine ones of others by the same artist in this collection, especially one of Sir George Villiers, the father of the celebrated Duke of Buckingham, and the evil genius of the house of Stuart, or perhaps we should say one of them. This is a very fine painting, though the face is not a pleasant one. It has been considered Janssen’s masterpiece, and the peculiarities of his style are very apparent in it. He generally painted on panels, and used ultramarine in his black colours as well as in his carnations, which is supposed to be one cause of their continuous lustre. He was commonly regarded almost as a rival of Vandyck, but he wanted the ease and grace of that consummate master. In delicacy of finish, however, and perhaps almost in brilliancy of colour, he is Vandyck’s superior. The growing fame of Vandyck, however, rather placed Janssen in the background : commissions of great value that would have been Janssen’s found their way to Vandyck’s studio, and at the breaking out of the civil war he returned to Amsterdam. There is another of his paintings here, of the ‘Queen of Bohemia.’ She was the Princess Elizabeth, and married Frederick V., the Elector Palatine. There is an exceedingly interesting portrait of the learned and virtuous Lord Falkland. Historians of both sides agree that his life was blameless even for those days. All his sympathies were with the popular cause, but he believed his duty lay in following the fortunes of the king, even though he mistrusted him. Often at the end of his musings he would call out ‘Peace, peace,’ and lament over the calamities of the country he loved so well. He was the centre of a learned following who strove to reform the Church, to separate secular from eccle-

siastical offices, and relieve bishops from their attendance in the House of Peers. When he buckled on his sword for the battle of Newbury he felt sure it was for the last time, and he fell at the end of the day ‘ingeminating “Peace, peace,”’ at the early age of thirty-four. There is also a portrait by Vandyck of another nobleman who lost his life in the Civil Wars, though in a different manner. James Stanley, Earl of Derby, with his wife and son, fill a large space over the sideboard in the dining-room. The countess is in white satin, wonderfully painted, and the earl is in black; the child is in a dull red dress. Within a furlong of where these lines are written is the house where Lord Derby passed his last night on earth before the melancholy procession set out for Bolton. Anything like an account of this invaluable collection is of course impossible, and all that can be even attempted is to notice very shortly a few that made the strongest impression during a short visit. There is a large picture of Monmouth, who indeed looks no better than any other of the worthless race from which he sprung, and the description of it is ‘Monmouth consulting his astrologer.’ But Brayley and Britton give it a different complexion. ‘In the library is a full-length picture of the Duke of Monmouth, in armour, accompanied by a man who appears like a foreign seaman, pointing to the Netherlands on a globe.’ There are some beautiful female faces, such as Charlotte, the daughter of the second Clarendon; she is simple and almost rustic-looking, with fine pleasant eyes, and another of the same name dressed as Mary Queen of Scots. Sarah Jennings, also the first Duchess of Marlborough, is hardly the imperious-looking person one would expect, who held such influence over Marlborough, and made Queen Anne do anything she desired. The cold cynical Marlborough says that he looked at the cliffs with his ‘perspective glass,’ in hopes that he might catch a sight of her once more, as he set out on one of his campaigns; and as for her impetuosity, she caused the grand pile of Woodstock, which had no equal as a royal residence in England, to be swept away, considering that it was not fit company for Blenheim. But as seen in the gallery at the Grove she is simple and pretty, and, so far from being the violent malignant person we know her to have been, we should almost think she was an unsophisticated country rector’s daughter. James II. is finely painted in armour, with his dark gloomy face, and indeed his picture is an excellent comment upon the vivid descriptions that Macaulay has given us of his evil life. But singularly enough there is a beautiful painting of the family of Charles I., and in this he appears as the Duke of York, a vivacious, laughing boy, with a pleasant and almost a luminous expression.

Then there is a fine portrait of Ellesmere sitting with his hat on in court, as was the custom in old times. He was also Chancellor of Oxford, and there is a portrait of him in the Bodleian Library. Like Clarendon, he was an upright judge, and indeed one of his sayings used to be, ‘Frost and fraud end in foul.’ He was once required to sign a document which would have wronged a subject, but pleased a Stuart king. ‘And would you have me put my hand to this?’ he said, and received an affirmative reply. ‘Nay, then,’ he said, ‘I will do more: I will put both hands to it,’ and then he tore it in two. He died at York House, and was buried at the country church of Doddleston, a few miles from Chester. Among the other portraits is one of Luther and the reformers. Luther is probably an excellent likeness, and indeed closely resembles the one at Würzburg. There is also another portrait of an English reformer, John Bunyan, which is a good painting. He is represented here as younger and more sprightly than we commonly see him. There is also a portrait of Cromwell with a bâton in his hand, that closely resembles one of the likenesses of the Protector in the British Museum. But one of the most interesting portraits is that of the late Lord Clarendon, the diplomatist and statesman. He held the seals of the Foreign Office under the Earl of Aberdeen, Lord Palmerston, Earl Russell, and Mr. Gladstone, during their tenures of office; and in the hall is a marble bust of him which corresponds wonderfully with the portrait. There is more refinement in the face than in any of the old portraits, and at the same time there is as much latent power and firmness. But, as before said, a volume might be written on this collection without once trenching on old ground.¹

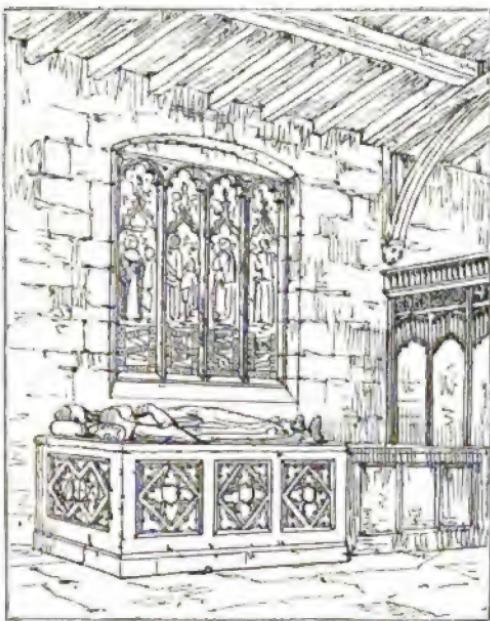
If we leave the lodge gate again at Grove Park we shall find ourselves opposite Russell Farm, as it is called, though it is in reality a very fine residence belonging to a great China manufacturer. And here it may be well to point out that those who go by the present issue of ordnance maps may be often misled, and it must rejoice pedestrians to think that a new issue may be expected in the fulness of time. Between Watford and Russell Farm is another farm bearing the name of ‘Nascot,’ and laid out apparently in a park. This is now occupied by the residences of professional men or merchants from London, and of course the houses are restricted to a certain size. Some are in well-kept grounds and have hothouses and vineeries, and the usual accessories of wealth, and a walk along the lanes through them is always pleasant. Flower-beds and velvety lawns greet the eye, and remind us that

¹ There is a description of these portraits by Lady Theresa Lewis, which will be found in her *Friends and Contemporaries of Lord Clarendon*. Digitized by Google

there is as much beauty in cultivated nature as in the wildernesses and solitary places. The last house that has been built along the Hemel Hempstead road (Oaklands) stands in somewhat broader grounds than the others, and these have been well laid out. Some fine oaks that grew in them have been left untouched and untrimmed, and these give it a snug residential appearance. It was customary not long ago to 'clear' the land where a house was to be built, and replant trees according to the owner's fancy in horticulture—an absurdly wrong practice, to say nothing of the circumstance that he could never live to see his trees more than shrubs. I have often seen a house built by a brother of a prominent member of the present Government. The house is a very admirable one as far as accommodation and convenience are concerned, but unhappily the indigenous trees were cut down some thirty years ago, to make room for newer and more fashionable growths, and the death of the proprietor has been in the way of his ever realising his expectations. The entrance to Grove Park is near the seventeenth milestone from London, and the pleasant village of King's Langley lies between the nineteenth and twentieth. The church is of various dates, but it is principally of the sixteenth century, though there are parts of much greater antiquity, and from drawings left of it before it was modernised it would seem to have been a place of great interest and beauty. Still, this has not been entirely swept away, for the demolition of its old features has been only partial.

The monuments of King's Langley are very interesting, and the group shown overleaf is extremely picturesque. The tomb in the foreground has often been called the tomb of Sir Piers Gaveston, the worthless favourite of Edward II., but the architecture and the costumes point to a more recent period, and it is more probably the tomb of Sir John Verney of Pendley, who was sheriff of Herts and Essex in the fourteenth of Henry VII. The costumes, it is true, would indicate a somewhat earlier period, but we often see now old gentlemen in fashions of the last generation, and a slight discrepancy in costume might be further accounted for by the circumstance that the effigies we see in ancient tombs were often chiselled during the lifetime of the deceased. According to Stowe, however, it would seem that Sir Piers Gaveston was first buried at the Preaching Friars at Oxford, and afterwards reinterred in King's Langley church. The screen divides the monumental effigies from the small chapel where Edmund Langley, the son of Edward III., was buried. According to a fine mellow copper-plate now before me, published in 1812, the tomb of Edmund Langley stood within the altar rails, and a wall, where the screen here

shown stands, blocked up the north-east end of the church. Britton says: ‘The tomb was originally differently situated, as appears from the sides being surrounded with shields of arms; though from its present position those only on the west and south can now be seen. The arms on the west side are those of Westminster, England, and Mercia; the shields on the south display the arms of Edmund, &c., and all the shields are in the centres of ornamented square compartments.’ Since Britton wrote, the tomb has been removed into a chapel, of which only the first bay of the screen is shown: perhaps, however, the original situation was not far distant from that shown on the old copper-plate; and if the



Tomb of Edmund Langley, Duke of York.

rank and dignity of Langley are remembered, it is not at all improbable that he lay within the altar rails, provoking the envy of the rhyming cynic on chancel tombs—

The further in the more they pay,
Here I lie as warm as they.

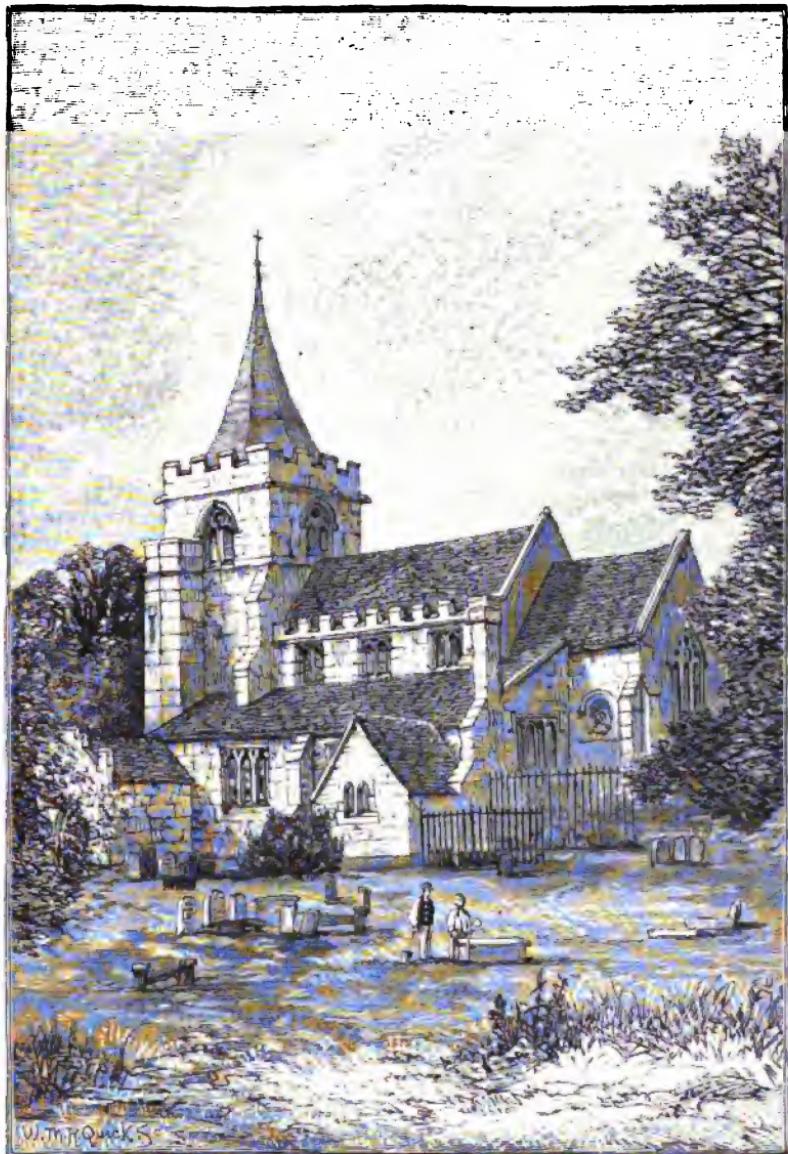
King's Langley was formerly not only a magnificent royal residence, but a place where parliaments were held. There are yet foundations in existence showing where the royal palace stood, but the dressed stone has long since been carted away,—as we may easily perceive if we notice the walls and farm-buildings in

the neighbourhood. Edmund Langley, whose tomb is in this quiet country church, it is hardly necessary to say, is the direct ancestor of our present Queen.

Formerly there was a priory of Dominicans here, founded by the son of an English baron supposed to be Roger Lucy, but commonly called Robert *Helle*, and his cognomen may be left for explanation to the eminent antiquary Gough, who says: ‘A Vallensibus ita cognominatus eo quod eosdem Wallicos regi Angliae rebelles, tanquam inferni undique devastavit.’ (Gough, p. 349, vol. i.) The buildings at the latter part of the reign of Edward I. must have been on a very fine scale. Indeed, through the munificence of the Edwards it became the most splendid of all the Dominican houses in England. The first four of the Edwards seem to have vied with each other in their munificent bequests, and indeed it is so near a royal residence that we can understand the advantages ‘Preaching’ friars enjoyed. Tanner calls this a house of Friars preachers founded by Hella, and ‘enlarged by Edward I., Edward II., Edward III., and Edward IV.,’ so that at the dissolution it was among the wealthiest of the Dominican houses. Speed estimated its revenues at 150*l.* 14*s.* 8*d.*, but Dugdale places them rather below that sum. I should however have no difficulty in believing that Speed’s estimate was well within the mark. It of course followed the fate of similar establishments at the dissolution of monasteries, and the lands belonging to it were divided among favourites.

Queen Mary indeed restored the establishment as a nunnery, with a prioress and nuns, but it was dissolved in the first year of Elizabeth’s reign.

A strange superstition, once prevailed in England—‘touching for king’s evil,’ as it was called—and this till recently was commemorated on a printed proclamation in King’s Langley church. The king’s evil, as it was termed, is (it is needless to say) a form of scrofula, and just such as might have been expected from the habits of the day. It appears now to arise from improper food, or insufficient clothing, or neglect, or improper treatment during dentition. It is not necessarily hereditary, though it often is so, and some authorities in speaking of it have said that it died out and reappeared. Still, all we know of it is that it is the result of such insanitary habits as prevailed of old; but that did not suit the advocates for royal prerogative, and it was commonly held that the cure, and only cure, was touch from the king’s hand. In King’s Langley church a proclamation was printed, and remained until recent times, in which it is said that James II. would officiate upon the unfortunate between All



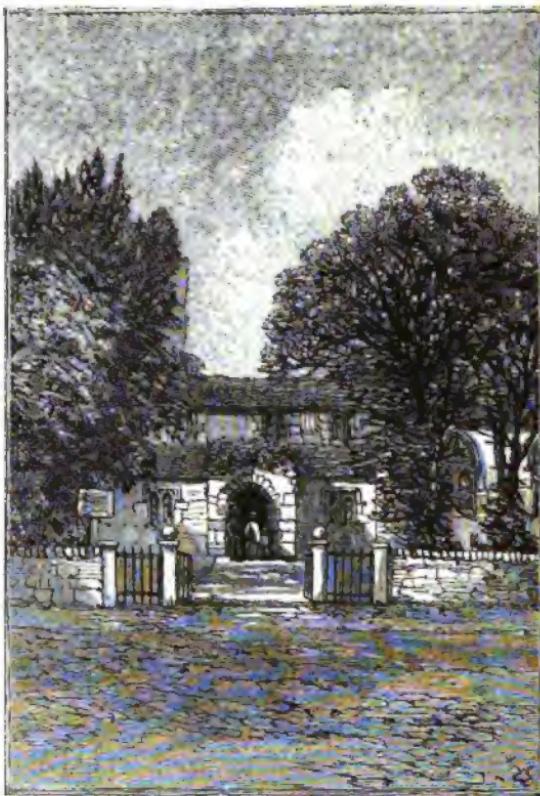
King's Langley Church.

Hallows and Christmas, and Lady Day and Midsummer. The origin of the ceremony I could never learn. It is doubtless connected with some ecclesiastical rite, though whether pagan or early Christian is uncertain. A proviso appeared in the proclamation that no person who had been *once* touched should enter another appearance, and this would seem to be in admirable keeping with the ceremony itself, as he would be officially speaking perfectly well, notwithstanding any crude and unorthodox belief to the contrary he might entertain. Under this proclamation was another, with so respectable a name as the Archbishop of Canterbury's (Sancroft's) attached, and he says that the feast of St. Matthias is not to be held on the 25th of February, as 'common almanacs have *wildly* and *erroneously* fixed it,' but on the 24th for ever, leap year or not. He seems to have been taken to task by Wallis, the famous mathematician and astronomer of Oxford; but I see upon reference to almanacs, both leap year and otherwise, that the feast is still kept on the 24th, without, as far as we know, any disturbance sidereal or terrestrial.

A short walk from King's Langley leads to Abbot's Langley, and it is so called from its having at one time belonged to the abbey of St. Albans. At the dissolution it came into possession of the Crown, and remained so till the latter part of the reign of James I., when that monarch granted it to Francis Combe, of Hemel Hempstead, who bequeathed it to Trinity College, Oxford, and Sidney College, Cambridge. The village of Abbot's Langley is exceedingly pleasant, long, straggling, and very picturesque. The church is quite a model of a 'rustic beauty,' and, before the black-oak pews with all their quaintness were swept away, the interior must have been as attractive as the exterior.

The only Englishman that ever held pontifical sway was born at Abbot's Langley. An English cardinal stood high, indeed, among Italian sporting men, who wished to *back* their opinions at the last election, but he was distanced sadly in the voting. Nicholas de Brakespear was certainly not the man we should have expected to fill so high an office. There is a place called after his name in the parish of St. Michael's, near the seat of Lord Verulam. According to all accounts, the English pope was a rather stupid boy, and the recluses of St. Albans refused him a monk's gown, because he was not sufficiently a scholar to satisfy the requirements of the order. By way of giving his talents a further chance of development he went to the abbey of St. Rufus in Provence, and became a canon, and afterwards abbot of that picturesque pile, Here, however, his fatal aptitude for misgovernment reappeared, and the monks appealed to the Pope, and Nicholas Brakespear

appeared before the pontifical court to answer, and so ingratiated himself at Rome that he was made Bishop of Alba, and sent on a rather hopeless expedition to convert the Teutonic races. When the Pope died in 1154 Brakespear was elected to the pontifical chair, and he assumed the title of Adrian the Fourth. Dressed with a little brief authority, he did indeed play fantastic tricks. He refused to invest the Emperor Frederic with the imperial diadem till he had prostrated himself before him and held the



Abbot's Largley.

stirrup of his palfrey while he mounted it. He held the chair for five years, and was buried at St. Peter's church, near his predecessor Eugenius. It was commonly reported that a fly had choked him, but a more readily received belief was that some philtre cunningly administered was the cause of a vacancy in the Holy See. Such is a brief sketch of the only Englishman that ever wielded the thunders of the Vatican, and it is just possible that, after their experience of the specimen we sent them, the cardinals did not think England a happy recruiting-ground for popes.

There is a beautiful example of a country house at Abbot's Langley, called, if I am not mistaken, Cecil Lodge. The trees round are fine, even for this part of England. The cedars of Lebanon grow almost as if they were on the mountain from which they take their name, and there are some wonderful horse-chestnuts. One is especially grand; its spreading boughs reach the ground, and there they take root almost like a banana tree, and spring up again into fine branching stems. There is a beech-tree like this in the Marquis of Lothian's grounds at Dunkeld, but here the circle of beech-trees that surround the parent stem have acted like parasites, and would seem to have emaciated the original branches that reached the ground; these are quite thin in the middle, for want of nourishment: their extravagant offspring have drained them. But at Abbot's Langley the original branches of the beeches have not acted so undutiful a part, and they are strong and powerful. There is a footpath from Abbot's Langley to Brickett's Wood on the St. Alban's road that is very beautiful, and indeed the view when we first emerge from the village is simply one grand panorama. It would perhaps be too much to suppose that there are many Londoners who have not seen it, but if there are they may at any time for a small cost, and within three-quarters of an hour's ride, see one of the grandest views in England. Epping Woods stretch out like a long black line in the horizon, and the vast landscape is dotted over with village church towers and country seats. London is visible on the right, and to the left we can see the long roof of St. Albans Abbey, which is about six miles distant. Speaking from recollection, which is of course often misleading, I should say that the celebrated view from Heidelberg is not superior in beauty to this, though there is another view, which lies in Middlesex, and is even somewhat nearer to London, that equals it in interest, and one which the several Londoners I have asked say they have never had an opportunity of seeing, and this is the magnificent prospect from Harefield, which will form one of the subjects of the December chapter of this series.

ALFRED RIMMER.

(To be continued.)

To a Rose.

Lovely child of sunny summer—
 Pinn'd adroitly on my breast—
 Whence art thou a prized new-comer ?
 How art thou my bosom guest ?
 Nursling of the sultry weather,
 Born of sunlight and the show'rs,
 Wherefore meet we thus together
 In this busy world of ours ?

Speak ! away with hesitation !
 Tell me all about you now.
 (In familiar conversation
 We dismiss the ‘thee’ and ‘thou.’)
 Tell me, I repeat, the story
 Of the days you deemed so bright,
 Ere you came to cast a glory
 On this button-hole to-night.

Ne'er was I a blind believer
 In the charms of country life.
 Dearer much to me the fever
 Of our city's hum and strife.
 Yet your pastoral confessions
 Might be welcome to mine ear.
 Breathe your innocent impressions
 While the breath is left you, dear.

Brought on earth to perish only,
 Blooming only to decay,
 Were you not, I ask you, lonely,
 Living lots of miles away ?
 Friends you had, who all adored you,
 Full of gay and giddy chat ;
 Still their tittle-tattle bored you,
 And their jokes fell very flat.

Was it not a dull employment,
 Idly waving on your stalk ?
 Would it not have been enjoyment
 Getting off to take a walk ?

Not for all the gems or metals
 All the mines on earth can give,
 With an earwig in my petals
 E'en an instant I could live.

Clover, buttercups, or daisies
 (Hidden far from vulgar view),
 Though they reap not half your praises,
 Lead a better life than *you*.
 Daisies, buttercups, or clover—
 Hermits of the hills or vales—
 Never, when their time is over,
 Come to die in swallow-tails.

Yet one comfort you may cherish,
 Though it will not last you long ;
 Happy flow'r, 'tis yours to perish
 'Mid the tumult of the throng.
 Hark ! although my gold repeater
 Marks the advent of the morn—
 Mirthful song in rugged metre
 Gaily on the breeze is borne.

You and I have been together,
 Dining up at Eaton Square.
 Pretty creature, tell me whether
 All was not 'quite utter' there.
 Meats were never more delicious,
 Wines with ours could never vie.
 Well as any one could wish us
 Have we feasted, you and I.

To the Op'ra next I took you,
 Just in time to catch one act.
 ('Tis not oft the poet, look you,
 Could have done so—that's a fact.)
 Then to cards and conversation
 At the club we settled down.
 There's a round of dissipation !
 Aren't you glad you came to town ?

HENRY S. LEIGH.

A Heart's Problem.

BY CHARLES GIBBON.

CHAPTER X.

YOUNG FOLK DISPOSE.

SHE had said to him with a pretty pretence of mystery, lowering her eyebrows, raising her eyes, and holding up her finger warningly, as if to imply that the greatest secrecy was imperative, ‘ You shall have a surprise to-night. Hush, do not breathe a word, for it may be overheard. I am the Mystic Maiden of the Wilderness ; you are the forlorn Knight lost in the maze, and I am luring you on to what fate you know not, care not, for you are desperate, and I—am very beautiful ! ’

Then she burst into a laugh as she observed his expression of uneasy wonder. He did not know whether to enter into her burlesque humour or to attempt to change it. He, like her father, had felt that her merriment had been only assumed as a mask for some other emotion, and a strange note in her present laughter made him sure of it.

They were walking across the lawn, he somewhat grave, she glancing coquettishly at him, and apparently much amused.

‘ I suppose that is part of your play,’ he rejoined, smiling. ‘ The last words of the speech are excellent because they are true.’

‘ Ah, but true things are not always excellent or pleasant. I pass the compliment because it is in your part to say nice things which are not true. How funny you look ! Have I taken you away too soon from the delights of the intellectual feast which I believe gentlemen always indulge in when released from the benumbing presence of womankind ? ’

‘ Your satire is undeserved. I am glad to be your attendant.’

‘ And to endure my folly, you would have added, but that would not have suited your part. Were you ever at the Surrey Theatre ? ’

‘ Yes ; were you ? ’

‘ Often ; and I remember the grand sensation scenes, and the fine way the heroes spoke, and their valorous deeds, and the pantomimes, and the oranges and the nuts we were requested not to crack during the performance—oh, it was just—just—lovely ! ’

'I see ; it is a melodramatic burlesque you are meditating.'

'Burlesque, indeed ! I am in earnest, and everybody must be the same.'

'Quite right. The more serious we appear to be, the more ridiculous we shall be to the spectators. It is the very essence of burlesque that the performer should seem unconscious of any buffoonery in his conduct.'

'It should not be difficult ; we make fools of ourselves every day without knowing it.'

Here there was a distant note of sadness which seemed a strange undertone in a life surrounded by all the tangible requirements of happiness.

'Some of us cannot help it.'

'None of us can, I am afraid. Did you ever settle in your own mind why we laugh at a clown squashing a stuffed baby when we should scream if it were a real one ?'

'There are many profound reasons ; but the simplest one is that we know it is a jest.'

'Ah, my reason is better than that. It is because we delight to ridicule the things which frighten us most ; and in the same way we sometimes take a wicked pleasure in annoying those we like best. Did you ever try to tease anybody you liked very much ?'

'I dare say I have done it often enough without trying. Most people do '

'All people do. But I mean, did you ever feel yourself compelled by some evil spirit to say and do things which you knew would be irritating, whilst you knew also that by-and-by you would be very sorry, and would have to make it up ?'

'As a joke, yes ; but that would only provoke a laugh, and there an end. No one would deliberately set about teasing another.'

'Not deliberately, but moved by some wicked impulse, and with a kind of fun in it too, just as you have seen naughty children enjoy the wriggling of a worm they have pinned to the earth. I have.'

'And enjoyed it ?' he inquired, laughing at her varying moods and inconsistencies.

'We are forgetting our play,' she rejoined abruptly, as if she did not wish to pursue the train of thought she had started. 'Come, Sir Knight, return to your part. Here is the wilderness, and there is the open glade. How pretty the lights are coming in through the spaces and breaking the shadows !'

'Beautiful,' he said ; but he was looking at her face, and as the soft light fell upon it the adjective was most apt. He was

wondering in a dreamy way, ‘Was she too far above him for him ever to hope to comprehend her?’

‘Yes,’ she went on, not observing his look, ‘it would make a nice scene on the stage; and if we only had a few rows of Chinese lanterns about the bungalow, it would look like the enchanted home of a wood-nymph.’

‘Or of the Sleeping Beauty.’

‘How happy she must have been! I should like to sleep a hundred years.’

‘And I should like to be the fortunate prince who wakened you.’

Mabel clapped her hands and glanced at him with such a merry expression of admiration that he instantly forgot the earnest undertone which had been running through her conversation.

‘Admirable! I see you must be my collaborator. We might almost have a rehearsal on the spot. Here is the scene, and who knows what marvels we might extemporise?’

‘We can scarcely play all the parts ourselves.’

‘We can manage the principal ones, at any rate; and if we require more, there is Graham, who is putting the palm-house to bed: we might call him when he has finished work!’

‘Then, it would be as well to have some general idea as to what our play was to be about,’ suggested Maurice mildly.

‘I have ever so many ideas—too many for my powers to arrange. You must help me.’

‘I shall try. This pretty scene ought to inspire us.’

They were on the terrace now, and she took her place within the doorway of the bungalow. She grasped the ropes of one of the hammocks, and resting her cheek against the uplifted arms her face was in darkness, whilst he, standing without, had the full benefit of the gently fading light.

‘Well, I am waiting for your inspiration.’

‘The time, the place, and the actors make it impossible to think of anything but a love scene,’ he responded, amused, but with that unconscious modulation which even the harshest voice obtains when sentiment is dominant.

‘Let us have one, then,’ was the prompt command, with no more sentiment in voice or manner than might have been infused into a request to pass the salt or to shut the door.

‘Am I to play the lover?’

‘There is no one else at hand, except Graham, and he is so busy with his plants that he would be sulky for a month if we were to call him away from them for such ridiculous fool’s-play,

as he would say. There is no help for it ; so go on, and I shall be the heroine. Am I anything like one ?'

'I think you are so like one that—'

He stopped : she had bent forward for an instant, showing her face, on which there was a curious expression of mingled anxiety and mischievousness, whilst in the eyes there was a look of tender yearning.

'That I find it difficult not to speak in earnest,' he continued.

'Well, the more earnest you appear the better will be the performance, according to your theory ; and there is nothing so easily burlesqued as—love.'

She had withdrawn into the deep shadow again, and the long breath which she took before pronouncing that last word seemed to him only a part of the stage business of the character she was assuming.

'Yes, it is easily done. I approach you softly, and try to look into your eyes—and you draw back, just as you have done ; and I say : "Miss Cuthbert, may I be permitted to make love to you ? It's a very nice amusement for leisure hours, and is interesting alike to peer and peasant."

'Ridiculous !—you would never speak that way if you were in earnest, and you are to pretend to be so, you know.'

'What would happen if the pretence should prove real ?'

'We shall not discuss impossibilities. Proceed, and do not call me by my own name. Call me Arabella, Mary Ann, or any other fine-sounding name.'

'Have you any preference ?'

'None—unless you could bring yourself to use the name you like best.'

'I did not know that I had displayed any partiality.'

'Have you forgotten—but there, we shall find another. It was a silly fancy of mine that you liked Lucy as a name, and that it would suit me. Use none at present, and perhaps we shall discover a good one as we progress. We are not getting on very fast, are we ?'

'We should go faster if you were to give me your hand.'

'That is too much to ask all at once.'

'Then let me take it without asking—not yet ?'

'That is a droll way to take it without asking ; to say "let me" is surely to ask leave—and I do not give it.'

'Why, you are challenging me !'

'To what ?'

'To mortal combat of wit and heart—you are daring me to take possession of a prize for which so many are sighing, and I,

blind coward, am afraid to touch it because it seems too high for one so low to reach.'

'Is that in your part, or are you—are you forgetting yourself again, Mr. Calthorpe?'

'It is indeed in my part; but we shall drop the play so far that I may speak my own feelings. I shall call you Lucy, if you will, or anything,' he went on excitedly. 'She was to me in thought all that you embody. I loved you before I saw you because I loved her—for God's sake, let me explain. She came across me like a dream and disappeared. You came—my heart was filled, not with a new love, or face, or form, but with the realisation of my dream. Be what you may, you are to me Lucy, and I love you and live for you.'

Passionate as his words were, his voice was so low that it sounded little above a whisper; but this subdued manner intensified his meaning.

She had shrunk so far back into the darkness whilst he spoke that she was invisible. He did not attempt to follow her; he waited, breathless, for her to speak, and there was a strange stillness in the place.

The silence lasted so long that the idea flashed upon him that she might have fainted, and he was about to call her name when he heard her dress rustle and she spoke.

'Would you have said this to—Lucy?' she asked, and the words seemed to pass from her lips with a gentle, tremulous sound, like that made by the leaves just before rain.

'To her?—Ay, I am saying it to her now. I cannot see you, but I hear your voice and she lives in you.'

'But she was poor.'

He was stung to the quick: that was not Lucy's voice or thought. The tone, too, was harsh as the sneer was cruel.

'I did not think of that,' he answered quietly, recalled to the actual position of affairs and to the bitter remembrance of how much reason there was for Mabel Cuthbert to misjudge his motives. It was as if the slow fire within him had suddenly emitted a bright flame, which only dazzled the eyes for a moment, then disappeared, the fire continuing to burn as strongly as ever.

There was another long pause. Presently the stillness was broken by the striking of a match, and he saw Miss Cuthbert standing by a little table calmly lighting a lamp. As the light fell upon her face, he saw that it was pale, but there was nothing else to suggest the slightest degree of unusual emotion.

'There—that will make the place look a great deal more comfortable. Are you afraid of the dark, Mr. Calthorpe? I am,

sometimes, and especially when anybody is telling me a story so excellently as you do. You really made me feel nervous; and if we had continued in the dark, I think I should soon have been screaming, for you were making me begin to feel as if you were in earnest. . . . Don't you feel cold? I am shivering.'

She was trembling, apparently simply as the natural result of a sudden chill and without any symptom of agitation. She looked round as if seeking something that she might put on to keep her warm, and he, perceiving this, took a soft rug from a lounge, advanced, and placed it round her shoulders.

'That is very kind,' she continued; 'thank you. We were getting on nicely with the play, but I am afraid we must stop now.'

'Yes, we had better stop now,' he echoed, gazing fixedly upon her calm face. He was mentally asking himself, 'Is this affection?—is it the shallows or the depths which perplex me?' There certainly had appeared to be something real in the tone in which she suggested that she would have liked him to be able to call her Lucy, and in the emotion so evident in the tremor of her voice as she asked him—Would he have told Lucy that he loved her and lived for her? And now she passed it all off with a covert sneer as a mere jest.

She lifted her eyes quickly; his manner and voice had startled her, but her inquiry was commonplace enough:

'Is there anything the matter with you, Mr. Calthorpe?'

'I am afraid there is,' he answered slowly; 'but if I were to attempt to explain it to you, it would only appear to be a continuation of the play, in which it is clear I cannot be your collaborator, as it seemed to me for a few minutes we both thought I could be.'

She tried to smile, but her under-lip quivered slightly, and it was with a constrained air that she said:

'I do not understand.'

'Nor do I. You would be amused if I were to tell you what has been running through my head since you lit the lamp. It seems to be far away from our play, as you call it; and yet in my own mind there is some vague association between the two. Shall I tell you?'

'Go on.' Her eyes had turned to the lamp again, and she was apparently much interested in arranging the wick to its proper height.

'I suppose you have not paid much attention to angling, but you have heard, I dare say, that our stream here used to be famous for its trout. I remember once a gentleman who was an expert angler visiting my father, and he took me with him on some of

his expeditions, from which he rarely failed to bring home a good basket. I was very young at the time, and was proud to be his companion, until on one occasion when I saw him have what he called "capital play." It was an angler's beautiful day—a somewhat dull sky, a gentle pattering rain which glistened like golden threads in occasional flashes of sunlight, and made dimples on the face of the water. He had hooked a fish which made a sturdy fight for its life, and he was delighted. He was in no hurry to land it, as he knew it was safe, and he admired its efforts to get away. He would humour it and let his line run nearly off the reel ; then, when the poor thing was no doubt congratulating itself upon escape, he would quietly tighten the line and wind up the reel ; then let it run again, and so continue until at last in triumph he landed the exhausted fish, tossed it into his basket, and cast his fly again. That was real sport to him ; I should like to know what the fish thought of it.'

'I do not quite see the application of your story.'

'And I unfortunately cannot be more explicit without the risk of being cruelly misunderstood. You wished me to speak as if I were speaking to Lucy, and I did so. I made a mistake : I thought you were in earnest.'

There was a flush upon her cheeks and a quick flash in her eyes. She seemed suddenly to grow tall and strong, and in the place of the excited and nervous girl stood a resolute woman whose face was full of scorn.

'I am in earnest,' she retorted, her teeth close. She unlocked a drawer of the table and produced a book which she flung before him. 'Do you see this ?—do you know it ?'

It was a volume of Tennyson presented to Lucy Smith by Maurice Esmond, with the quotation beneath the simple inscription, 'Would that my tongue could utter the thoughts that arise in me.' He handled the book with something like awe ; he glanced at it and at her flushed face alternately with an expression of eager anxiety.

'What does it mean ?—I gave this book to *her*.'

'And did that quotation mean anything ?'

'All that it says. I did wish to speak to her even then, but my position kept me silent for her sake as well as my own.'

'And your position now enables you to say to Miss Cuthbert all that you would have said to Lucy Smith but didn't,' she exclaimed sarcastically. Then, pointing to the inscription with finger trembling slightly : 'Yet you made her believe then all that you would have me believe now ! Oh, Mr. Calthorpe, drop this

pitiful pretence. You know me—you knew me at the first. It is my position which enables you to speak now!'

Strange as the revelation was, and totally ignorant as he was of the circumstances which transformed the poor sempstress into a rich heiress, Maurice did not feel any shock of surprise. The declaration sounded in his ears as the most commonplace observation about the weather or any ordinary topic might have done. His whole mind was occupied with one thought which took form in a monotonous mental iteration of one phrase :

'And you are Lucy, and you can think this and say this of me! . . . And you are Lucy, and you can think this and say this of me!'

To her he was only a dumb man who, finding his deceit and treachery unmasked, had still the boldness to gaze steadily upon her, although he had no speech to ask for pardon. His silence convinced her that she had spoken truly ; his steady gaze, in which even at that moment she was conscious there was something of sadness, irritated her. Whatever of sorrow or regret there might be in his expression was no doubt due to the fact that he had been discovered, and her passionate scorn rose higher.

'You do not defend yourself; I am glad of that, for if you had done so my contempt would have passed to the lower depth of loathing. I pity you. I should still like to find something in you to excuse—*myself*. See now how plain I can be—I may be so, because we shall never speak to each other again ; we may meet, but if you speak I shall openly insult you. I say this—I who tell you in the same breath that I loved you, Maurice Esmond—ay, I loved you.'

She sat down, her arms crossed on the table and her face hidden in them. But there was no movement of the body to indicate unusual respiration, no sound to suggest sobs or tears. She was perfectly still, and the whole change of position appeared to be the mere mechanical movement of a machine, although the position and the stillness were full of pathos.

He did not move or speak ; his eyes rested upon her, full of ineffable tenderness, and he went on monotonously repeating that phrase to himself, only adding to it her last words :

'And you are Lucy, and you can think this and say this of me—and you loved me!'

She lay under the full light of the lamp ; he stood as it were on the border of the circle where light ended and deep shadows began. To his mind it was their lives : to her there was still light, for him nothing but darkness.

She suddenly raised her head : her face white, but the eyes

still gleaming with passion. She looked at him with an affectation of wonder as she rose.

' You are still there, and yet you do not speak ! That is best. But do not misunderstand what I have said. Remember I said I loved you, and poor or rich that love was strong enough to make me think, even then, that had you offered me yourself I should refuse for your sake. Poor or rich, that love was strong enough to have enabled me to walk with you through misery and find happiness in it because I was with you. You left me with what seemed to me a promise that you would return to me. Within the hour you left us I learned who you were. I was told that you had been deceiving me ; I would not believe it. I waited for some sign—none came until you knew Mabel Cuthbert.'

He was still silent ; those words still echoing in his brain, and his memory was quite blank to the letter he had written and to the efforts he had made to discover her.

' You see,' she went on bitterly, ' you have the honour of being my collaborator after all ; and our play is written, acted, and ended. This sort of thing goes admirably without rehearsal. You say that I am Lucy, and yet quite different from her ; that is true, ridiculous as it may sound—Lucy died when I became satisfied of your baseness. Then I determined to use all the cunning I possessed to test the real extent of your feeling for her, no matter what I might suffer myself in doing so, for I knew that it could be nothing compared with what she had endured. Little art was needed to win you, and I understand now that it was not worth while wasting even that little upon you, for you care nothing—you do not even feel ashamed that you are discovered.'

Was he trying to distract her by this apathetic silence ? That suspicion calmed her. He should see that he had not now the power even to drive her into a passion. She proceeded as she thought coldly, but there was the nervous rapidity of speech which showed the excitement she was labouring to control.

' I need not trouble you with explanations about the change in my circumstances. Your father knows everything, and has doubtless told you long ago ; in no other way could you have been prepared for the foolish part you have played. I am going now' (the voice altered slightly here, but so very slightly that even if the man had had his wits about him he would scarcely have observed it) : ' I am going, and I shall ask—no, I cannot ask anything from you. I shall tell you one wish that I have—it is that my father should know nothing of our former acquaintance. You may respect that wish or not, as you please. . . . Good-bye.

. . . I hope we shall never meet again. . . . I hope I shall soon forget you.'

She moved quickly to the door and there halted, wavering for an instant in her resolution never to speak another word to him. The man had turned his face to the darkness, and did not see her.

His absolute silence was terrible.

'Good-bye.' The word was gasped out involuntarily, and she fled. He remained in the darkness and did not see her.

CHAPTER XI.

HARD LINES.

MR. CALTHORPE, senior, was in too happy a frame of mind to be at all disturbed by the information given him by the Colonel, after a brief absence from the room, that Mabel had been obliged to retire for the night, and that Maurice had started to walk home. Indeed, he augured well of the event which these facts suggested.

'I believe they have come to an understanding, Cuthbert,' he said gleefully, 'and they are both too much excited to show themselves to us. I half suspected that there was something to happen to-night, and I dare say we shall hear all about it to-morrow.'

'I hope it may be as you say,' answered the Colonel doubtfully, 'but I am anxious about her, for she has asked me not to go to her room till she sends for me.'

'Why, that confirms it; that makes it as plain as daylight to me. The thing is settled, and we may congratulate each other.'

'I shall be glad if we may do so,' said the Colonel, smiling at his friend's enthusiasm.

'I am sure of it; at any rate, we understand each other, and that will make all come right.'

So they shook hands, and Mr. Calthorpe drove home alone.

Maurice had not returned, and calculating that he could not be long, Mr. Calthorpe decided to wait up for him. He was one of those happy mortals who are so well pleased with themselves, or who have so many sources of mental occupation, that they do not readily tire of their own society. Besides, it was his custom to sit late studying his own affairs, with an occasional diversion into the affairs of others. Therefore, it was no tax upon his patience to wait for his son; and on the present occasion his meditations were of such a pleasing nature that it was two o'clock before he began to wonder at the delay in Maurice's appearance. He was surprised that the time had passed so rapidly, and began to think that Maurice must have come home and gone to his own

room without learning that he was waiting for him. He rang, and the sleepy footman answered the bell.

'No, sir, Mr. Maurice has not come in yet.'

Mr. Calthorpe repeated his instructions, that his son was to be told to come to the library before retiring; then fortified himself with an extra glass of sherry, and again abandoned himself to his pleasing reflections. There was daylight at last; the full tide of fortune was flowing in upon the house of Calthorpe again, and it had all been managed so quietly that few people would know how near it had been to an utter wreck. And he had done it all!—he who had wasted the fortune had retrieved it. There was something to be proud of in the achievement; and he sighed with regret that he had not been early thrust into a diplomatic career, when, with such qualifications as he possessed, there was no saying what he might have accomplished. He had a complacent notion that with half the energy he had devoted to his own pleasure he might have made a place for himself in the history of his country. But he philosophically concluded that he had made room for some one else, and that he had eaten his cake, and, on the whole, enjoyed it.

Half-past two.

There was only one faint cloud flickering between him and the clear light which he saw ahead, and that was Maurice himself. He was such an ass! If there were a stupid way of doing anything, he was sure to find it out and do it that way. He was the sort of fellow who might pick up a Kohinoor and throw it away. Of course, no man in his senses would hesitate to avail himself of the opportunities which Maurice had of winning the hand of such a girl as Mabel Cuthbert, and yet there was the possibility that he might in this respect prove that he was not in his senses.

Three o'clock.

For instance, what on earth could he be doing now? Even if he had crawled all the way from Hollyford, he ought to have been home. Great as his joy might have been if he had proposed and been accepted, there had been more than time enough to have walked the excitement out of his system in less than six hours. Perhaps he had been refused! There seemed to be nothing else to account for this long absence, and Mr. Calthorpe was much disturbed by the thought. He tried to comfort himself by the reflection that the Colonel was on their side, and that with his assistance, if Maurice could only be passably reasonable, victory was still within their reach.

The door opened and Maurice quietly entered. His face was white; in his eyes there was a look as of one just awakened from a strange dream, and not yet quite certain what part of his

surroundings belonged to the dream and what to the reality. He was perfectly calm.

'I was told that you were here, sir, and that you wished to see me. I am sorry to have kept you up so late.'

Mr. Calthorpe was relieved for the first moment by the calmness of his son; but presently he fancied that he perceived something unnatural in it. He affected, however, not to observe anything unusual.

'It is late,' he said, smiling; 'but I have such good news for you that I could not rest without telling you.'

'Good news for me?' was the observation in the listless tone of one who knows that such a thing is impossible.

'Yes, and I expect you have good news for me, too. But why don't you sit down?—if you have been walking all this time, you must be tired. Take a glass of wine.'

'Thank you, I would rather stand.'

'Why, man, what is the matter with you? where have you been?' exclaimed Mr. Calthorpe, rising, astounded and alarmed.
'You look ill.'

'There is nothing the matter, sir. I have only been taking a longish walk. The night was very fine. Don't alarm yourself on my account—I am not even tired. Wish I were; but sleep is indeed a treacherous friend—comes to a fellow when he doesn't want him, and deserts when body and brain have most need of him. You haven't anything handy that would help me to a sound sleep? I know I should be all right if I could only get that.'

Mr. Calthorpe looked very grave, and what little colour there was in his cheeks faded out of them. He placed his delicate white hand on his son's arm.

'You have spoken to Mabel?'

Maurice nodded.

'And she has refused you?'

Another nod, this time with a slight jerk of the shoulders, suggestive of impatience with himself, and indifference as to the effect of the confession thus carelessly made.

Mr. Calthorpe sat down, grasping the arms of the chair, as if he required their aid to steady him in his seat. At length:

'Is it her fault or yours?'

'Mine.'

'Humph—I thought so. However, for once it is best that the fault should be on your side, for it may be mended.'

'Impossible, sir. The break is complete, and you will only give yourself useless worry if you do not dismiss the subject from your mind at once. She and I can never even meet again.'

'Just so, just so,' said the father soothingly, and as if addressing a spoilt child; 'everybody says that under similar circumstances, but it is wonderful what brittle wares are cemented by the judicious application of a little common-sense. What you tell me would have been very bad news but for the good news with which I am able to counterbalance it. Her father wishes you to marry her.'

Maurice started; for a moment his eyes brightened and his cheeks flushed as if he had been quickened to the sense that he had passed through a hideous nightmare and awakened to hope again; but the light went as quickly as it came.

'That will make no difference,' he answered calmly. 'When her father hears what she has to say, he too will tell you that he does not wish to see me any more.'

'Nonsense, Maurice!' retorted the father with a slight note of irritability in his tone; 'he will do nothing of the kind. If the girl cares for you at all—and I am sure she cares for you a great deal—he will be your friend, and she will be guided by his wishes.'

'But she does not care for me at all, and in this case her father will not wish to alter her decision.'

'Ah, I see; you have had a quarrel about the quality of a kiss or the colour of a moonbeam, and you have parted in deadly hatred, convinced that the end of creation is at hand, and that, you two being separated, the world must stand still. The world would have a bad time of it if it were governed by lovers' humours: there would be more disagreement as to what ought to be than there is about the kind of weather we ought to have. Come, come! put sentiment in your pocket for a little while, and look at the matter as if your digestion were in good order. If the girl does not care for you, she does not care for any one else.'

'She did care for some one else,' said Maurice bitterly. That was the first sign of emotion he had shown since his entrance, and the father rejoiced exceedingly.

'And will again; and why should not you be the next favoured one?'

'Oh yes, I have no doubt of that. She is as other women are: she will be courted; she will remember and forget at convenient seasons, and she will marry. Why not? Most women have a dozen affairs of the heart to amuse them before accident fastens them to some one man. Then, if they do not seek new conquests, they can plume themselves openly upon past glories or follies. A woman sows her wild oats in breaking hearts, or imagining she does so—which is the same thing. She does not see how easily the man vents his disappointment in an oath, turns his back, and

laughs at her. It is only the fool who suffers, and he is not worth counting.'

Maurice laughed as he finished this tirade, and helped himself to a bumper of sherry.

'Capital!' exclaimed the father; 'you have turned cynic: which proves two things, namely, that you are very fond of her, and that you do not believe this quarrel to be so fatal as for the moment I dare say you imagined it.'

Maurice laid down his glass and turned to his father with a resolute expression. He was quite awake now, and quite assured that the events which had occurred at Hollyford on the previous evening were real.

'I did not expect to have to enter into the discussion of this matter with you immediately, sir,' he said, taking a chair; 'indeed, I did not think I should be able to do so. I feel now that it is fortunate you waited up for me, so that we may finish the business at once. I cannot enter into full explanations at present, but I beg of you to understand that even if Miss Cuthbert were to consent to accept me now, I should decline.'

This was said so deliberately, and with such a total absence of the slightest shade of sentiment, that it was impossible even for Mr. Calthorpe, with all his desire to think otherwise, not to feel that Maurice was thoroughly in earnest.

'Yet she's the only woman I've ever known you really care for, except the nameless one to whom you once referred when I first explained my projects to you.'

'That is so; and if I were not afraid of making you fancy that there was still a possibility of our decision being altered, I should tell you she is the only woman I am ever likely to care for.'

'Don't speak for a few minutes. Let me try to get this into my head; I suppose I am tired, and my brain is not clear enough for such a string of conundrums. Wait a little.'

Mr. Calthorpe clasped his hands, closed his eyes, and rested his head back on the chair. There was a faint indication of a smile on his face. Maurice sat watching him with the calm expression of one who has resigned himself to the inevitable.

By-and-by the father partly opened his eyes, peering at the son; and presently the tips of the fingers of one hand began to tap those of the other as if he were unconsciously practising the first exercise on the pianoforte. Then he said very slowly:

'You care for her very much, and she does not care for you at all?'

'She despises me.'

'Is there any substantial ground for this quarrel and for her contempt?'

'Most substantial ground.'

'What is it? You have done nothing dishonourable?'

'I have done the most dishonourable thing that a man can do,' was the quick reply, with a bitter laugh. 'I have jilted a girl when she was poor, and made desperate love to her the moment I knew that she was rich. Sought to cajole her, too, into the belief that I did not know her to be the girl I had deserted—that I liked her for herself, and would have done so if she had been as poor as the other. Sought to win her with lies, and to deceive her with one of the most fantastic stories that ever a man dared to tell, and had the impertinence to expect to be believed. Oh, it is horrible! The only thing in which I can hope to rival her is in despising myself.'

He rose and paced the room with short, nervous steps, scowling darkly at his bitterest foe—himself.

Mr. Calthorpe gave him time: it was one of his theories that anger, especially with one's self, is always short-lived; and, as he expected, the outward signs of Maurice's ebullition presently subsided.

'I suspect it is of little use discussing this matter further to-night—this morning, I ought to say now. There will be no chance of our coming to any sensible decision until you have had a rest. We had better wait.'

Maurice drew aside the heavy curtains, undid the strong fastenings, and threw open the shutters. The cold light of the dawn fell full upon his face, which was colder still. There had been rain, and under a light breeze the leaves outside seemed to be shivering and dropping heavy tears. It was one of those damp, gloomy mornings, the first glimpse of which sends a chill through even those whose nerves are in good condition. But it was the kind of morning which suited the man's mood; to him there was a kind of selfish satisfaction in seeing Nature itself look miserable. It is as painful to have the sun laughing in one's eyes when the heart is dying as to have a clown in motley capering on the coffin of our love.

'Yes, it is morning. I am not going to bed. Are you tired, sir? Of course you must be. What I mean to say is, will it fatigue you over-much to finish our conversation now?'

'Well, you know that I am not very sleepy-headed, and I have done without a night's sleep on a less important occasion than the present; and so, if you feel that you are calm enough to proceed, I am quite at your service. Besides, I can take a nap afterwards;

and there will be the more likelihood of resting after we clearly understand each other.'

There was an undercurrent of kindness in the father's manner, although he spoke with that air of quiet indifference as to whether the interview should continue or close which a clear-headed man assumes in the presence of one whose passion has got the upper hand of him. He was, however, not at all unwilling to proceed, for he saw that Maurice had some fixed purpose in his mind, and he knew how impossible it was to move him when that was the case. He saw the brilliant castle in the air, which a little while ago had appeared to him as solid as one of granite built upon a rock, dissolving rapidly in the clouds, and he was conscious of something in himself that more nearly approached the sensation of despair than he had ever known before. So he wished to know the worst.

'You are very kind, sir. Thank you. I can only offer you the consolation—that you shall not be bothered in this way again. You see I am somewhat out of sorts.'

'Well, I think, Maurice, it does not require one to be very wide awake to see that you are a good deal out of sorts; and if we are to proceed with this matter at present, I should say, take a breath, and try to explain the whole position quietly, so that I may understand it.'

'I feel quiet enough, if I do not appear so.'

'Ah, people in the height of fever are never aware of it.'

Maurice looked out at the window again, and the chill aspect helped to cool him. He returned to his father.

'There is nothing more to understand except that it is useless to hope that there is any possibility of Miss Cuthbert becoming reconciled to me. When I leave Calthorpe to-day, I shall probably never revisit it; I certainly shall not do so until—I have heard that she is married.'

'In that case, if you should return, it will be as the guest of the new proprietor of Calthorpe,' said Mr. Calthorpe very deliberately. 'I take for granted you have not forgotten that our term expires very shortly.'

'I have not forgotten, but at this moment it would be a falsehood to say that I care. . . . Forgive me, sir: I am sorry on your account, but not at all on my own; for the conditions—and as it seems the only conditions—on which we could retain possession are hateful to me. I did not seek Miss Cuthbert because—'

He could not speak the words—his love was so strong; the motives attributed to him by her were so base! He covered his face with his hands, but instantly dropped them to his sides frowning

at this exhibition of his weakness. The father bent forward and took one of the clenched hands in his own, raising himself with its aid to his feet.

'Come, Maurice, we shall take a turn outside. A breath of fresh air will do us both good. Give me your arm.'

Maurice obeyed; they found hats, and passed out to the grounds. Mr. Calthorpe did not immediately allude to the subject which was uppermost in their minds, but he did not add to his son's pain by any foolish attempt to attract his thoughts to ordinary subjects. In silence they walked slowly round the lawn; then traversed the avenue and returned to the front of the house. Mr. Calthorpe looked up at the pleasant face of the old-fashioned building and shook his head.

'It will not be easy to leave it, Maurice, and I don't like even now to give up the hope of retaining it, at least for my time. I dare say I shall manage it somehow. Let us take another turn, and then we shall get back to your affairs.'

Maurice was deeply touched by his father's whole conduct, and was keenly sensible of what he would suffer if obliged to leave the old place. This feeling drew him out of his own selfish bitterness, and the hope that he would be able to make his declining years comfortable without dishonour, gave him strength. He became somewhat of a rational being again.

'My affairs are easily settled. You know what has happened; of the future we shall talk another time; for the present, I wish you to place it in my power to satisfy Miss Cuthbert that she has cruelly wronged me at least in one respect.'

The father's eyes brightened, and he carefully bent his head to hide them. This was his thought: 'So! the case is not quite hopeless yet. He still wants to appear respectable in her eyes. He shall.' This was what he said:

'I shall be glad to do anything you wish, Maurice, if it will give you relief.'

'Then, first promise me, without asking why, that you will on no account let the Colonel know that I was acquainted with Miss Cuthbert before I was introduced to her as his daughter.'

'I understood as much from what you said, and conclude that she was the lady who formed such a serious bar to my plans for your future welfare?'

'Yes.'

'You have my promise. Now tell me what you wish me to do.'

'I wish you to explain to me how Colonel Cuthbert's daughter came to be brought up as a poor girl and under another name.'

She told me that you knew all, and plainly accused us of being adventurers, taking advantage of this knowledge to secure her fortune.'

Mr. Calthorpe did not reply immediately. They walked on until they came close to the house again. Then :

' I do not see how this is to help you ; but come in, and I shall tell you the whole story.'

CHAPTER XII.

THE UNDER-CURRENTS.

THE man who professes total indifference to the subject about which he is making eager inquiries, is either deceiving himself or trying to deceive others regarding the state of his feelings. Thus sententiously reflected Mr. Calthorpe as he munched a biscuit and sipped a cup of tea which he had roused a servant to prepare for him on re-entering the house. He knew that Maurice was not afflicted with that most vulgar and inexcusable of mental diseases —idle curiosity. The more he reflected, therefore, his hope grew, that all would end well in spite of the bad appearance of things at present. He did not mean to express this hope, however, as it was another of his theories, that you can always get anybody to go your way if you give him a fair start in his own track.

' You are aware that you are asking me to give the particulars of Cuthbert's life, which I know he does not desire to have spoken about.'

' Do not tell me if it would be a breach of confidence. I should never have asked you anything about it but for what she said, and the shame it casts upon us both.'

' Well, I can scarcely say that it is a breach of confidence, because Cuthbert has never asked me to maintain secrecy ; but you know there are some things about which we are the more bound to remain silent for the reason that we are left free to speak. This is one of them ; and yet I have promised to tell you the whole story. I did so because I know Cuthbert's feelings towards you, and believe that under the circumstances he himself would think you entitled to an explanation ; and because I can trust you.'

' I am only seeking some way in which I may make her feel how much she has misjudged us both.'

' So far as I can see, the most extraordinary part of the story relates to yourself in your former acquaintance with Miss Cuthbert, and in regard to that you know more than I do. What I have to tell chiefly concerns Cuthbert. You would scarcely

believe that the quiet gentleman with whom you are acquainted had been the most harum-scarum of the fellows who were my friends in youth. But he was so: the wildest of us all in any frolic; the most recklessly extravagant and the lightest of heart. There was, however, a difference in his wildness from that of others—his was the wildness of healthy, good-humoured youth. In his worst frolics he took care that nobody was harmed but himself. In his extravagance he certainly did tax his mother's and his brother's patience; but that is the worst I knew of him.

‘I never liked his mother, and so you need not be surprised if I do not speak kindly of her. The brother I refer to—from whom he has inherited Hollyford—was the son of his father's first wife, and was at least twenty years his senior. He was an eccentric recluse, and even at that time we rollicking blades called him the old fogy. He was miserly in all his money dealings, and that was enough to inspire us with contempt for him in proportion to our liking for careless Frank. That there was something good in him you will see in the end; but we had no chance of discovering that, as he spent all his time in improving his property, and what leisure he had in lecturing his brother.

‘Frank always listened to him patiently, but without any pretence of penitence; and droll as it seems, the two were very good friends—probably because they met so seldom.

‘However that may be, the stingy old brother always threatened never to help Frank, but always did it; he stood between him and his mother's wrath on many occasions, until at last Frank gave deadly offence to both. He committed the unpardonable crime of secretly marrying the only daughter of a poor curate. This terrible fact became known by Frank's confession when his mother had completed negotiations for his union with a lady of title and fortune, and issued her commands that he was to prepare for the bridal. Mother and brother had been aware that there was a good deal more than ordinary love-making between Frank and the curate's daughter. They only shrugged their shoulders, shut their eyes, and confidently waited for the time when he, seeing the folly of his ways, would desert the girl. So long as it was only a commonplace affair, in which the woman alone could suffer any particular harm, nothing was said; but as soon as it became known that the matter was serious, and that, without consulting anyone or asking anybody's leave, he had really bound himself for life to the woman he loved, there was the devil to pay. He was banished the house; the mother said he should never have a penny of her money, and the old fogy declared that he would himself marry the lady who had been intended for Frank, so as to leave

him no hope of inheriting Hollyford : and he would have done it too, only the lady did not see the fun of the arrangement.'

'These details interest me, sir,' Maurice interrupted for the first time; 'but I am a little impatient to arrive at the stage where the particular explanation I desire comes in.'

'I beg your pardon ; you are right to remind me of that. I, too, am interested, and am apt to become so garrulous about those days of my youth as to forget my object in recalling them. Having roused these old memories, I cannot help looking at myself through the big end of the telescope Time, and am amused to think what an extraordinary figure I must have cut long ago. However, it is of Cuthbert I have to speak, not of myself. You will see presently that all these things bear directly on our subject. Well, to continue : Frank stood his ground like a man, and with a quiet pluck that none of us had ever given him credit for. We had known, of course, that he was a brave fellow, and that he would make an excellent soldier. Any man will fight well enough when he is in the heat of battle, and knows there is nothing for it but to give and take hard blows. The real trial of what stuff you are made of is when you have absolutely nothing to do but to stand still at your post, hearing the ping of your enemies' bullets as they pass you, and feeling the bite of those which graze the flesh, whilst you have no ammunition to reply with, and no visible foe to knock down—whilst, in fact, you can only stand there ready to die for your cause. That is just what he did.'

Mr. Calthorpe became so much excited by his own eloquence that he took a short turn across the floor, and back to his chair.

'He must have suffered a good deal,' said Maurice, who was sitting by the open window, nursing his knee.

'He suffered most abominably, and most of all on account of the poor girl who was his wife. But she was as brave as himself, and poor as they were (for he had now nothing but his lieutenant's pay to live upon, and some old scores to hamper him), she made the couple of rooms they had more bright and cheerful in Cuthbert's eyes than any mansion he had ever been in—at least, so he said, and I suppose we must believe him. I know that I spent two very pleasant evenings with them, and they seemed to be happy. The young wife was charming, and made me, at any rate, at once forgive Frank his folly. Lucy—that was what he called her—was just the sort of girl to make any man believe that love and nothing a year were a beautiful combination.'

'And you call it folly, sir !' said Maurice, with a tinge of bitterness, for the name had quickened his pulse.

'Well, I was pretty much of that opinion when I was your

age, and I am afraid that experience has only confirmed it. I never pretended to be a man of feeling, but I did feel something for the plight of these two young idiots, and fortunately it was then in my power to be of some service to them. . . . Don't be impatient; we are coming to the part which will chiefly interest you. I do not believe in anybody maintaining a regular, steady-going hate; but if ever anybody was capable of it, Frank's mother was, in my opinion. She not only kept her own word about money matters, but she contrived to make the brother keep his also. It would have been bad enough if that had been the worst, but that was not the worst. Frank's regiment was ordered out to India; and although he was eager for active service, he was in no cheerful mood whilst he was making what arrangements he could for his wife's comfort until he could send for her. He trusted me to help her if she should be in any trouble. I promised to do so, and would have kept my promise faithfully if she had not rendered it impossible by disappearing on the very day Frank sailed. They had spent the previous day together, and he has told me how bright she tried to look, although he could see that the thought of their approaching separation was never absent from her mind; and how she tried to cheer him by hopeful pictures of their speedy reunion. They parted. On his arrival at Calcutta, he found two letters waiting for him. One was from his wife—and as you are a sentimental fellow, you can guess how he felt when he read it. It was short, and it struck me so much when he sent me a copy of it that I can remember every word. This was all :

“I have deceived you. I can never see you again.

“LUCY.”

That was about as big a cannon-ball as you could wish any poor devil to meet.’

‘But there must have been some mistake,’ exclaimed Maurice, jumping from his seat.

‘Of course there was, but he did not know it at the time.’

‘The letter was a forgery?’

‘No, it was written by her own hand. The other letter was from his mother, and very abruptly told him that his wife had proved, as she had expected, unworthy of him. Then there was much wise counsel as to how he should conduct himself under the circumstances, and assurances that if he would even now behave like a man, and forget this false one, he should be reinstated in the affections of his family.

‘He was terribly cut up, poor fellow, and used all the influence he

possessed to obtain immediate leave of absence, so that he might return to England. He failed, and owing to the state of India at that time his request cast some discredit upon him amongst his fellow-officers. He wrote to me, and I did all in my power to discover the runaway and to find a satisfactory explanation of her conduct. My inquiries tended to confirm all that her own note suggested and his mother plainly stated. In reply to my report, he wrote briefly bidding me make no further inquiries, as he would make none—from that hour he would think of her as one dead. He wrote to me at long intervals afterwards, but he never referred to this subject.'

'But what was the meaning of it all?'

'That he only learned after the death of his brother. The whole thing had been managed with an adroit cunning worthy of—a woman! The mother had invented and carried out the scheme which destroyed her son's happiness and killed his wife. Yet to the end of her days she maintained that she had acted with the best intentions, and I have no doubt she was thoroughly convinced that she had done so.'

'But how could she do all this and remain unsuspected?' ejaculated Maurice.

'Ah, that is the beautiful part of the story; and briefly, this is how it was done. She found out young Mrs. Cuthbert, and saw her alone. You would expect her to scold and to reproach the poor thing. Nothing of the kind. She spoke to her so tenderly that at the first interview she entirely won Lucy's confidence. At the second interview she took the interest of an affectionate matron in the future of the child which was soon to be born. At both interviews she contrived to impress Lucy with a sense of the great loss poor Frank had sustained on her account—loss of friends, fortune, and future prospects. At the third interview she persuaded the girl that the only real proof she could give of her love for him was to leave him, and to leave him in such a way that he should never wish to see her again.'

'And was she so weak as to consent? Had she no faith in him?'

'She was very fond of him, and she was acting under the influence of a kind lady who had had much experience in the world, and whose good intentions could not be doubted. Lucy was a fool, but I am sure she did not understand the interpretation which might be put upon that note written at the dictation of Frank's mother. She only meant that she had deceived him in buoying him up with hopes of their speedy reunion at the very time when she had resolved for his sake never to see him again. The note was written:

she disappeared, and the two things were interpreted in the ordinary way. But she carried the joke further than the mother intended ; for she did not even allow her to know where she had gone to. She took lodgings in the house of a tailor somewhere in the suburbs of London, and died there about a year after Frank's departure for India. The tailor and his wife were good-natured people, and adopted the friendless child, who was brought up under the name which her mother had assumed—that was Lucy Smith. At Hollyford the mother was triumphant for a time. Let me draw breath in admiration of that woman's genius !'

The expression on Mr. Calthorpe's face as he drew breath was certainly not one of admiration. He proceeded :

' As years passed, however, and Frank obstinately remained away from England, and refused to receive the slightest assistance from Hollyford, or even to correspond, the mother became troubled in spirit. The reports of his heroic deeds and rapid promotions only galled her the more, and at length she confided her secret to her stepson. He was shocked, and instantly set about trying to put matters right. He placed the whole affair in the hands of a competent lawyer, with instructions that he was to spare no expense in the effort to discover the fate of Mrs. Frank Cuthbert. The search was a tedious one, but ultimately successful, as you know, although he did not live to see it. Only a few weeks after Colonel Cuthbert's return to England the lawyer was enabled to place in his hands the complete proofs which enabled him to identify his daughter in Lucy Smith. He took her abroad, provided her with the best masters money could obtain ; she proved an apt pupil, having already educated herself to a much higher standard than most women reach, and at length brought her here, properly finished and polished, to present her to his friends as the heiress of Hollyford. . . . That is the whole story : now, what do you think of Miss Cuthbert ? '

Maurice was much agitated as he answered impetuously :

' Think ?—that she, believing that I knew this story, and pretended not to recognise her—that she was justified in the meanest thoughts she entertained, and in her scorn of us both.'

(*To be continued.*)

B E L G R A V I A.

HOLIDAY NUMBER, 1881.

Miss Anderson's Colours.

I.

I WAS a big boy of fourteen when I fell in love with Miss Anderson. A precocious youth for my age, it was thought, and one whose amatory proclivities had been unduly developed by the study of all the penny novels and romances that could be procured in the town, or that the liberal supply of pocket-money would run to—which was furnished by my parents and guardians; one parent maternal, and one guardian masculine, who became in due course my mother's second husband, and whom I had hated by instinct from the first moment of my setting eyes upon him.

I was one of the pupils of Doctor Ragstaff's academy for young gentlemen at Weston-super-Mare. I had been a pupil from the early age of twelve, which was at the time my father died, and when my mother, I fancied, wanted to get rid of me. I did her an injustice, but I was full of morbid fancies at that period, and my guardian, trustee, and what-not, I have said that I disliked. The real fact was, that I was far from being a strong boy, and the doctors had warned my mother that I was better in the country: I was a boy growing very fast, a lanky youth, thin and cadaverous, with a love of fiction unnaturally developed, and some taste for painting and drawing which no one would develop for me. My nickname at Dr. Ragstaff's was ' Hair-pin ; ' and as I was considered a somewhat effeminate youth for my age, possibly in conjunction with my lath-like proportions, it was not wholly inappropriate. Two years after my introduction to the Ragstaff seminary, I became passionately devoted to Miss Anderson; and the history of that boy-love forms the first portion of this little chronicle.

It is as well to state at once that, being an odd boy, mine was very naturally an odd passion. I am as fully convinced now in sober manhood as I was in the hot blood of my fourteen years, that I was truly and desperately in love with Janie Anderson. There was no mistake about it; I had all the symptoms of the

most violent species of the disorder. I could not eat, I could not sleep, I wrote poetry in large quantities, I neglected my lessons, I forgot to have my hair cut; I had but the one thought, morning, noon, and night, that she was very precious to me, and that life without her would be a precious blank. It was a love too deep to take anybody into my confidence; it was so intensely deep that the whole world remained in complete ignorance of my passion, and my inhuman principal compelled me to swallow large draughts of the most filthy compounds because I was looking pale and worn. As if tincture of rhubarb, or the salts of Epsom, comforting as those preparations may be under less afflicting circumstances, could have had any ruddy or robust effect upon me!

No—there was not a soul who suspected my attachment to Miss Anderson. Concealment preyed upon my hollow cheeks; and, ‘How dreadfully poorly that boy is looking,’ I heard Dr. Ragstaff say petulantly to the tutor; ‘anyone would think we were starving him to death.’

I was being starved for want of a reciprocal affection; but no one suspected it. Janie Anderson least of all of them, *at first*. The master was anxious, and the medical attendant drugged me and tried the most terrible experiments; but I loved on and gave no utterance to my absorbing passion.

I was a very reserved boy, and sensitive to ridicule: this saved me from becoming the laughing-stock of my comrades, the butt for the witticisms of a large community, with whom I had not a single tie of sympathy. It was enough to love! to feel that the secret of my adoration was apart from them, unknown by them, and yet was everything to me. There was a consolation in this—and in my small way, I was perfectly content. The idea of a hundred and twenty boys, red-cheeked, impudent, bloated boys, becoming cognisant of my love for Janie Anderson, threw me into a cold perspiration to imagine. I was making a fool of myself, undoubtedly—but only to myself. To the world at large, I was ‘out of sorts,’ and growing too fast; I should be better presently.

On the contrary, I got no better. I saw Miss Anderson twice every Sunday in the distant pews under the gallery where it was customary to pack Miss Fitzsimmons’s numerous pupils, and several times a week in our early morning walks we crossed each other’s path in our respective lines of march. Miss Anderson did not regard me as her admirer, although she was a young lady of about my own age who looked about her with great interest, and might have seen my earnest gaze without much trouble. She had eyes for Thomas Swann and little Charlie Hunter and the ambitious Griggs, not to mention Willie Bamford, who was our biggest boy and was

growing a moustache—but in no one instance did she glance at me. I had not a grin eternally stamped upon *my* countenance. When Miss Fitzsimmons's young ladies came in sight on the parade, or were proceeding up or down the path through Kewstoke Woods, I felt fit to drop, and actually turned faint, but I did not begin nudging my companion with my elbows, or falling into clown-like antics, like the rest of them. I preserved my outward decorum, and moved not a muscle of my respectful countenance. Perhaps, if I had moved a muscle or two somewhere—I believe one or two of the rudest boys even moved the muscles of their left eyelids *en passant*—my silent attachment for Miss Anderson might have been suspected a little earlier; but it was not my nature to be demonstrative, and I pursued the even and somewhat monotonous tenor of my way, consoled by the one poor thought that there was no one in our school whom she really loved, and that to smile at Bamford one day, was to cut him for Bob Griggs the next, and forget the two of them for young Hunter on the Sunday.

By degrees the school acquired the information—false, true, or distorted—that pretty Janie Anderson was a real heiress—an uncommonly real heiress, to whom untold wealth of the most indescribable description would devolve upon the death of her father, a gorgeous being of great importance in India, but whether military, civil, or commercial, was not quite clear to us. But an Indian nabob, or a nabob-pickle merchant, mattered nothing to me. I loved her for herself alone.

Whether her father's Eastern life had given her in any way ideas of Eastern colours or display I cannot affirm for certain, but it began to impress itself upon me that she was always the brightest and most gaily dressed of the Miss Fitzsimmons's young ladies, and that there was considerable effect in the colours she displayed, however 'pronounced' they might occasionally be. She looked extremely well in everything, if at times a little *bizarre*; and a bright sky-blue dress, a dazzling crimson bow, a flower, or an emerald-green ribbon, that would have vulgarised the appearance of nine young ladies out of ten, appeared to me to adorn her equally, and to give especial tone to some peculiar trait of dazzling beauty. Yes, I was very far gone in those dreamy, morbidly sensitive, happy and unhappy days, when Janie Anderson was all the world to me.

A boy of strong imaginative powers, my mind went back to the days of chivalry, when the knights of old wore their lady-loves' colours in their casques, or plumes—'or anywhere else they could stick 'em,' Hunter said, who was an irreverent young beast—and it began to impress itself clearly upon my mind that if any love-lorn

being had a right to choose his colours from the colours of the maid whom he adored, that being was myself. It was a delicate compliment which would be conveyed by degrees to her ; it was only a question of time. If she were observant and appreciative, it would clear up the whole mystery of my profound attachment to her : I could afford to wait and watch and pray.

There was only one huge difficulty in the way—which colour was it to be ? What *were* the colours of Miss Anderson under which I was to fight and die ? Miss Anderson was seldom dressed twice alike ; it was evidently *carte blanche* as to the expenses of her wardrobe ; and she was the envy and glory of the Pelican House Academy. I had it ! I would change colour with her change ; I would watch each varying shade of dress or ribbon, and suit myself to match. I would wear upon my breast, close over my throbbing heart, and therefore slightly on the left side, a neck-tie of the exact hue and shade—or as near as I could get it—which Miss Anderson might be honouring for the nonce.

I had a liberal supply of pocket-money ; there were in my box various coloured silk handkerchiefs which would assist me in my plan when my expenses became too much for me ; I could reduce my supply of penny numbers ; I could sternly refuse to lend any more money to my impecunious brethren who were always in difficulties and arrears ; I could deprive myself of the tart-like luxuries of life ; and devote myself heart and soul to Janie.

And I did. And it was a long, long time before anyone guessed my secret, and then it was discovered by the young ladies of Miss Fitzsimmons's seminary—‘the blooming Pelicans,’ Griggs had vulgarly christened them—and not by any of the dull-witted, thick-headed youths amongst whom my unhappy lot was cast.

Even then it took six months, or close upon six months, before the suspicion dawned upon the feminine mind that something more was meant than met the eye. I was so demure a youth, so grave and reverend a signor, that the girls could not believe it of me, and thought it was a mere coincidence. This I learned afterwards. But I forestall matters.

I became as watchful and observant as a fox in the gosling season. I was very quickly aware that, as a rule, what Miss Anderson was pleased to wear on Saturday afternoon—when the band was playing in the hotel grounds, or in the Parade, or in Ellenborough Park, and when Miss Fitzsimmons's young ladies were allowed to promenade for half an hour—would be as a rule displayed in the Fitzsimmons's pew at church on the following Sunday morning. And this gave me the opportunity of making Saturday evening purchases by express permission of Dr. Ragstaff. This

was the rule of Miss Anderson's colours, I repeat ; for there were several exceptions in the course of the six months, and then I was more or less at fault.

It began, of course, to be remarked amongst my schoolfellows that I had taken to neck-ties of a vivid hue, and much ridicule as to my choice of colour was hurled at me in consequence; but not the biggest boy in the school dreamed of associating 'Hair-pin' with Miss Anderson. 'It was only my confounded vanity,' Tompkins said, tugging at my 'get-up' one Sunday morning with two hands. 'What made me think of such absurd colours he couldn't make out, and blowed if he was going to stand it for one. He wasn't going to have the shine taken out of him like that !'

Tompkins was the head boy, and a bit of a bully ; but he succumbed to my indomitable will. I was not to be turned from the set purpose of my life by a jest, or studied insult—meek and uncomplaining as I might be. That I suffered mentally I need not say, and that there were times even when I prayed that Janie's colours might for a week or two be temporarily subdued ; for every colour did not suit me, and green made me positively hideous of aspect. Still, I kept on with my plan, persevering to the end of time—or, strictly speaking, to the end of the term.

Just before the beginning of the summer vacation then, Janie Anderson discovered that she might add my name to the long list of her admirers at Weston-super-Mare. A lemon-coloured ribbon with red spots was the clue to my secret. Miss Anderson had had her suspicions aroused, and this was the 'test question.' On the Saturday she had appeared on the Parade with a hat trimmed with the ribbon mentioned, and with a fancy bow of the same colour at her throat. She was dark, and the effect was absolutely charming—never had she seemed to my doting eyes so perfect, so sublime—and I did not hesitate as to these colours for myself until I was before Crumpet and Wisp's plate glass in the High Street, and saw the very article in the window labelled 'From Paris, 1s. 11d. per yard.' Then I recoiled, not so much at the price—although it was approaching the end of the term, and the exchequer was showing manifest signs of depletion—as at the very startling appearance it presented amongst a box of ordinary bonnet ribbons.

I had often purchased bonnet ribbons before, and had been ingenious enough, by the aid of surreptitious padding, to pass them off as neck-ties to my contemporaries ; but this, as young Griggs would have said, was 'a corker.' I could not believe that anything which had been so becoming to Miss Anderson would, apart from her ethereal self, look so horribly startling. Still, *noblesse*

oblige—the Knight of the Snow-white Plume would not have faltered, rather would have glowed with pride at the distinction which it gave him; so I stepped into the shop and bought three-quarters of a yard, with the young lady who measured it off surveying me critically.

I had been there so frequently on Saturday evenings, my purchases were so particularly eccentric, and Miss Anderson dealt there so very regularly on the Thursday or Friday, that it was probable that the attendant might have a suspicion at last of my deep attachment. Would she betray me? Would it become necessary to bribe her into secrecy, or to beg her to subdue that aggravating smile which puckered up the corners of her mouth, and suggested a solution to the mystery in which I was enwrapped? I did not know. In the holidays with my mother I would think it over seriously.

When I surveyed myself in the glass at five-and-twenty minutes to eleven on the following Sunday morning, I felt my heart sink dreadfully, I was so awfully demonstrative about the chest. The lemon silk in the broad morning glare was nothing but the brightest brimstone, and the red spots were only large blobs of crimson gore, and looked like danger signals at a distance. That I should catch the eye of the whole wide world, I was convinced at once. I was surely going to proclaim on the house-tops that I was Janie Anderson's devoted slave, and that her name would be found in big capital letters on my swollen heart.

I hesitated, then I shook off any sense of recreant cowardice, and went downstairs at the very last moment, when the boys were getting into rank, and it would be too late for many irritating personalities to be launched at me. The boys saw me and my tie, however, and grinned from ear to ear immediately—Griggs, who was about my age and size, and was generally paired off with me in the procession to church, seized the opportunity of my propinquity to murmur ironically, ‘Oh! what a gorgeous swell!’ and Doctor Ragstaff, who was putting on his gloves in the hall, gasped for breath, and then came towards me slowly and ponderously, with a stony glare at my adornments.

‘Griffin,’ said my preceptor sternly, ‘are you making yourself a ridiculous object out of bravado, or from sheer stupidity?’

‘I—I don’t know what you mean, sir.’

‘I mean that absurd neck-tie, sir,’—he shouted. ‘No one but a being lost to all sense of propriety would put on such a vulgar thing as that on a Sabbath morning.’

‘Indeed, sir!’

‘Indeed, sir!—yes, sir!’ growled Doctor Ragstaff; ‘and it is in

shocking bad taste, sir—a clown's taste, and no one but a clown would think of wearing it. Go upstairs and take it off directly. Go—no, stop—you can't go—there's the five-minute bell. Quick march—you must take the consequences of facing the eyes of society, and—and turn your jacket up, do, or we shall be the laughing-stock of the whole town. And during the afternoon, Griffin, oblige me by learning the nineteenth chapter of St. John, instead of going out for the usual promenade with us. Forward.'

We marched to church, Doctor Ragstaff and myself hardly in the most devout frame of mind, and the boys disposed to be hilarious. I did not object to turn the lappels of my jacket over my brilliant neck-tie, and to walk on coweringly as if in the middle of a snow-storm, but in church I defied them all, and was true to my colours—or rather her colours—to the last. I displayed my tie and shirt-front to the public gaze—for Janie Anderson wore lemon and crimson also, and hers was no clown's taste, as the Goth of a schoolmaster had affirmed. And Janie Anderson, for the first time in her life, smiled at me—almost broke into rippling laughter, I believe—and whispered several times to her companion, Miss Terryball, and looked up and smiled again, and bestowed so much generous attention in my direction that, as it afterwards transpired she was sent to bed by Miss Fitzsimmons directly she got home, and was doomed to bread-and-water diet for the remainder of the day.

And all this was for my sake! When I knew all the truth, I thought my heart would break. To think—as I used to think constantly—that she had suffered for me; there was the apex to the big mountain of my love!

Shall I say that I returned the smile? I did, and with all the fervour of my nature thawed at last from its reserve.

'What are you grinning at, Hair-pin?' mumbled Griggs in the middle of his prayers. 'Is there anything the matter?'

'Nothing, Griggs; nothing,' I responded in a whisper.

I was in ecstasy—on the wings of love I was soaring in imagination all about the church! I blush to think now of my boy's irreverence, and complete forgetfulness of everything but her. But I was happy—Janie Anderson and I understood each other at last! This was true affection; the reward of my undeviating constancy.

I was in the seventh heaven of delight, and I fear the whole of the Reverend John Poundtext's sermon was entirely lost upon me; the school seemed demoralised, and there was so much whispering and general fluttering amongst the dove-cot of the Fitzsimmons's, that the more orderly of the congregation were completely scandal-

ised. Happy and memorable morning of my undevoutness, I cannot erase thee from the record of my boy's life—of a romance stronger than are most boys' follies or sentiments, as a rule. I returned home to take off my neck-tie, and receive my punishment with philosophy—with joy even, for it was for Janie Anderson's sake. I was resigned to my seclusion ; I could think of her, and of her smiles. I could even over the nineteenth chapter of St. John, which I was diligently committing to memory, plan out my future life with her—our courtship and marriage, the blessings on the union bestowed freely upon us by an Indian nabob and my widowed mother.

Till the end of July—one more fortnight—my life was roseate; I saw her in the distance twice or thrice a week, I wore her colours on my bosom faithfully, though I was grateful for the more subdued tone about them which suddenly, and as I thought very remarkably, set in ; I was only fretting, unboy-like to the last, at the close advent of the holidays, and the seven long weary weeks which would intervene before I saw her again, even if—oh! awful thought ! —it was fixed as Fate that she should return to Miss Fitzsimmons.

Two days before the holidays there came a startling surprise to me. Doctor Ragstaff had known it all along, but this was like him. He had kept his secret well, the myrmidon !

It had been arranged that the news should be broken to me at the last moment, as I was a weak and sensitive boy forsooth, and took the affairs of life a little strangely. Had I been a 'cracked' boy, or a boy likely to be cracked, I could not have been treated more like a child. Hence, I behaved like a child away from them—but not before their faces—oh ! no—and not at all like a young man going on for fifteen years of age !

It was broken to me by degrees, and in old Ragstaff's most presumptive manner, that my mother had married quietly and privately, a fortnight since, the trustee to her estate and mine, and that a brand-new father had been provided for me. I remembered the other so well, I had been during my whole life so much the father's boy rather than the mother's, that the match seemed as sacrilegious as Hamlet's mother's match with Claudius. Life was a trouble to me ; it was more than a trouble when it was told me that under these circumstances I had no home to return to, that the house in town was empty, and my mother and stepfather had gone to Italy for their honeymoon. Thus it became imperatively necessary for me to remain during the vacation under the protection of Doctor Ragstaff.

It was my misfortune, and there was no resisting it. I said 'Very well, sir,' and maintained my dignity till I was in my own

room, when I gave way a bit! When I had recovered somewhat, which was the next day, there were fresh items for my consideration. I found that I was somewhat of an incubus to Doctor Ragstaff, and very much in the way of his calculations. He was going up several mountains—having an insane passion for going up mountains abroad; and Mrs. Ragstaff, whom I liked very much, and who was a gentle, sickly, and much-stamped-upon lady—speaking metaphorically, of course, for the Doctor did not kick her—was going with him part of the way, to sit at the foot of the mountains possibly till he came down again. And neither Doctor Ragstaff nor his wife wanted to be bothered with me. One was too robust, and the other too ailing, and I was a boy in the way.

The suggestion came at length that I should stop at Weston-super-Mare. Doctor Ragstaff's maiden sister remained in charge of the establishment, and though she was not remarkably cheerful company, she would be better than the Doctor.

' You will be quite your own master, Griffin, in due bounds of reason,' said Doctor Ragstaff in a cheerful and persuasive tone; ' and there will be nobody to interfere with you, and no occasion to trouble about too much study. You can bathe, attend the amusements of the place, see all the company, take my pony-trap out once or twice a week, and in fact thoroughly enjoy yourself. And there's the run of my private library, Griffin, and you will find Roberts's "Discovery and History of Florida" very entertaining reading, and "The Naturalist's Library" on the top shelf full of instructive pictures. Good-bye, and a pleasant holiday to you, my boy. Bless you—till September next.'

And away he went, and I was left alone at school. I was left in a bad way, with everything to depress me utterly. Miss Fitzsimmons's pupils had been scattered to the four corners of the earth; the house in which I lived was only an empty barracks; the schoolrooms through which I wandered were full of ugly echoes; I might never see Janie Anderson again; my mother was married, and my new father I did not like.

Yes—I was a strange boy. Standing apart from my boy's life now, I can see that very clearly. I was a misanthropic, dreamy, unreal boy, and it was no wonder people failed to understand me. As for poor Miss Ragstaff, born with nerves, which had become preternaturally developed, I was a responsibility to her, and in the first week of my vacation nearly worried her to death. I did not eat, I did not read, and I flatly refused to go out for a walk, or take her brother's disgusting pony out for exercise on the plea that a drive would do me good. I preferred to keep to my own room; I was my own master in the vacation, and I would be lord

and master too. I would brook no interference from Miss Ragstaff, I thought, until her real solicitude for me, her anxiety about my health and state of mind, touched me with some gratitude.

' You'll be ill—you'll really be ill, Edwin,' she said to me one day with tears in her eyes. ' Why don't you take a walk, or take me for a walk ? '

' I don't care about it, thank you,' I said firmly but politely.

' There's a Circus in the town,' she continued ; ' and though my brother the Doctor has always maintained that nothing so upsets the mind of a boy and takes him from his mental training as a Circus, still, as it is the vacation, I would not mind your going in the least.'

' I hate a Circus.'

' There's a "Reading from the Poets" at eight this evening too.'

' I prefer to read my own poets,' I said sarcastically.

' Then, my dear boy, walk, or read, or Circus, or something, just to oblige me,' she said entreatingly ; ' for I am quite ill with thinking about you, and must write and tell my brother so.'

' Miss Ragstaff, if it will oblige you in any way, I will take a walk,' I said.

' It will indeed—and I'll put on my bonnet and go with you, if you like.—There !'

I could only say ' Thank you,' though I was not partial to Miss Ragstaff's company. She was very tall and thin ; she limped badly, and wore plum-coloured glasses in the daylight, having weak eyes with red lids like a rabbit—but I accepted the honour of her company, and we walked along the Parade, where the music was playing and the company promenading to and fro. She had brought me to hear the band, having the impression that the music would cheer me up, but it jarred upon my nerves, and I was anxious to get away from it.

' This is not going for a walk,' I said. ' I don't call this walking.'

' Well, Edwin, it's all the walking I can do,' she said, sitting down on a vacant bench. ' Bunions have, for the last seven years, rendered pedestrian exercise a labour and a sorrow to me. There's a beautiful stroll through the Kewstoke Woods, with the sea all the way too, for the young and strong like you.'

' And you wouldn't mind my leaving you ? ' I asked.

' Not in the least, Edwin. There will be luncheon at one, and dinner at six, as usual.'

' I feel now as if I should like to walk on and on and on till dinner-time,' I said, excited by the fresh air.

' But you will come back to dinner, of course ? ' said Miss Rag-

staff, regarding me suspiciously, as if the idea that I was going to walk away for the next six weeks had suddenly occurred to her.

'Of course I will.'

I was glad to stride off on my solitary journey—to feel free once more, to get away from the crowd, and the German band, and up on the green slopes, where the pines grew by the sea, and the scene was like Arcadia in the sunshine. I set off at a smart pace. I had soon got through the town and had ascended the hill; I was in the wood, and by short cuts through the wood, and past the old turnpike, and down by the sea again to the quiet old fishing village beyond, before Miss Ragstaff's bunions had done throbbing. I walked for two hours into the heart of the country; then I turned and trudged back again. The way had not seemed distant. I was not greatly fatigued when I was in Kewstoke Woods once more and gaining upon 'home.' I had thought all the way of Janie Anderson. I had counted up how many weeks and days and hours and minutes would elapse before she was in her pew at church again. I had speculated as to her life and actions now. I had wondered very much if she had ever wondered about me. I had drawn such fancy pictures of my life and hers—of dangers and heroic rescues, of stern fathers, deep dungeons, distressed maidens, and St. Edwin always to the rescue—that time had drifted by me very rapidly. A church clock in the distance was striking five, when I heard sounds of sobbing and crying a few yards along the path in advance of me. The turn of the road hid the cause from view; but I stepped out, and came suddenly upon a book lying with its leaves open on the grass, and a few paces farther on—Miss Anderson!

I paused to recover my breath. Was it an apparition conjured up by the intensity of my thoughts? could it really be my fair enslaver proceeding slowly along the path, with her ungloved hands spread before her face, and her wail of grief echoing through the summer air?

Truly I could not be mistaken. The scarlet and brown dress I had seen before; the scarlet stockings, the little hat with the scarlet feather, and the one long black tail hanging down her back beneath it, and tied with a scarlet bow and ends. It was she—but in grief and despair, such as I had never seen her a victim to before. Hers had seemed a life all smiles and sunshine—all merry laughter. Even Hunter had said once—but not to me, or I would have crushed him on the spot—that 'that "dark un" at Fitzsimmons's was always grinning like a Cheshire cat at everybody.' At everybody!—she who had had only smiles for me of late days! *He* well might envy me.

I stooped and picked up the book which Miss Anderson had dropped, or had thrown from her—I was uncertain which—and approached her nervously and hastily. This was the crisis in my life—it had come at last, and there was no resisting it. Even my constitutional shyness was not proof against it.

'I—I—I beg your pardon very much, Miss Anderson; but—but—but,' I stammered forth, 'you've dropped your book.'

Miss Anderson dried her eyes hastily, stifled her sobs, turned round, held out her hands for the book, and then jumped as if she had seen a ghost.

'Oh! good gracious!' she exclaimed; 'are *you* here, then? That is,' she added with feminine tact and sweet simplicity, 'are you—ain't you—one of Doctor Ragstaff's pupils?'

As I wore one of Doctor Ragstaff's mortar-boards, with his characteristic blue and saffron tassel wagging at the side, the question was irrelevant; but I answered meekly, 'Yes, I am.'

'And—why haven't you gone home for the holidays?' she asked in faint astonishment. 'I thought that you—that all the boys—had left Weston long ago.'

'All but me.'

'I hope nothing's the matter with you—measles or anything'—she said, getting a few paces from me now.

'I—am quite well, thank you, Miss Anderson,' I stammered again. 'I remain at school because I haven't a home to go to.'

'How very funny!'

I did not see the fun of it; but so that it amused her, I did not mind very much. She was actually laughing again—only it terminated in a cry, which was more surprising.

'It's—it's exactly my case,' she expressed at last. 'I haven't any home to go to, Master Griffin. I—oh!—I haven't anybody in all the world to care for me!'

'Pray don't say that,' I hastened to answer; 'I am sure that anybody—everybody—would.'

She dried her eyes again at this assurance. My words were evidently comforting. I longed to ask her how she knew my name was Griffin, but I dared not on so short an acquaintance. How happy I was now, walking by her side and talking as if I was an old friend of hers. How glad I was that my mother had married the trustee—anybody—so that I had had no holiday at home!

I had aroused Miss Anderson's curiosity very much, and she appeared to have no scruples as to asking me questions. The tears were gone from her face now, which was as radiant as the skies above our heads. She had wholly recovered from her embarrassment at meeting me, and was as calm and self-possessed a

little lady as I had ever met—as I have met even in my after-life.

‘How did you know my name was Anderson?’ she asked, as we proceeded towards Weston-Super-Mare together, she swinging the book I had restored to her by one cover.

‘I—I really cannot say. Some of the boys told me.’

‘Did Master Bamford tell you?’

‘I don’t think he did. It’s very likely,’ I answered in a confused manner.

‘Because his pa knows my pa—and does business with my pa—I have heard Miss Fitzsimmons say,’ remarked Miss Anderson. ‘Where’s he gone for his holidays?’

‘I don’t know,’ was my reply; ‘he does not speak to me a great deal.’

‘Don’t you like him?’

‘Not much.’

‘I suppose he’s the head boy, though?’

‘He’s our biggest boy, but he isn’t very bright,’ I said despairingly, not liking so much discussion on the merits of Master Bamford.

‘Is Master Tompkins the head boy?’

Her thorough knowledge of the names of all the pupils of Doctor Ragstaff’s school was really very astonishing.

‘Well—he may be sometimes.’

‘And how old are you?’ asked the curious Miss Anderson.

‘I—I’m fourteen. That is, I am in my fifteenth year,’ I added, as she looked disappointed somewhat.

‘Not more!’ she exclaimed in astonishment. ‘Oh, you are a big boy for your age. Why, I am fourteen, and only just up to your shoulder. See.’

And Janie Anderson stood side by side with me, and looked at me with so confident and sweet a smile, that I felt that these were surely the groves of fairyland through which we were walking, and she and I two beings of a new and happy world.

‘Yes, you *are* small—I mean, I am a tall boy,’ I remarked at last. ‘They say I am growing too fast, but they can’t stop it.’

‘Don’t you let them,’ she said in a warning voice; ‘I hate short boys. If ever I marry when I grow up, Master Griffin, I’ll marry the tallest, handsomest man I can find.’

‘Really?’

I did not think I was handsome, but I was resolved from that day forth to allow no one to interfere with my growing.

‘Why can’t you go home?’ she inquired now. ‘What’s the matter with your home? Painting it?’

'My mamma is away ; she has married again and gone abroad.'

'Not left you for ever !' she said, with her eyes becoming very round and pitiful.

'No—only for seven weeks. All the holidays.'

'Have you been fretting much ?'

'Not very much. I shouldn't have fretted at all if——' then I became very red and very white, and felt that my conduct was unseemly and precipitate, and added, 'if she had not married without telling me anything about it.'

'How very funny !' she said again.

'What is—who is ?' I inquired.

'Why, I was fretting because I could not go to my father, or my aunt in Devonshire, or anywhere out of this nasty, dull, stick-in-the-mud place. Oh ! it's dreadful when everybody's gone away, and there's only Miss Fitzsimmons's red nose to look at.'

'Your father is in India, I think ?'

She was never surprised at my information, I noticed.

'Yes. He's coming back some day. When I'm a young lady, papa says. And what do you think that nasty, spiteful Miss Croser says ?'

'I haven't the slightest idea,' I replied.

'That that cannot be, because I shall never be a young lady. Because I'm a giggling, forward little thing, and keep the school always in commotion, and—and so on,' she explained. 'Is not she rude ?'

'Extremely rude indeed,' I asserted; 'I never heard such insolence.'

'When she comes back next term, I don't think I shall speak to her.'

'I wouldn't if I were you.'

'She's only a brewer's daughter—and brewing's very low. It's trade,' she said, elevating slightly the tip of her little nose.

'Yes, I suppose it is.'

'None of my family has ever been in trade, except a cousin ; and we never spoke to him again.'

'Poor fellow !'

'And I have always been *stuck* here, vacation after vacation, ever since I was such a tiny little thing—not bigger than that,' she said, indicating an impossibly diminutive stature with her hand ; 'and my mother died when I was a baby ; and I shouldn't know my father if I met him coming down the High Street. Isn't it awful ?'

'But you're very happy, as a rule ?' I said.

'Ah, yes ; generally, that is. They all like me at school, ex-

cept Miss Croser ; and I am fond of fun, and we have plenty of it ; and papa sends me a great deal of money to spend, and beautiful presents, and things from India ; and I may dress just as I please, and—'

Something occurred to her memory at this juncture, and she looked at me and broke into a peal of such sweet, merry, musical laughter, that I laughed too, though I did not perceive the cause for my hilarity. It was soon explained to me.

'Oh ! I say, it was such a long while before I found out that you were imitating me. I couldn't believe it till Fanny Perkins told me she was sure you were ; and when you came out in yellow and red, it *was* fun. Wasn't it, now ?'

'Yes—it was fun,' I reiterated, blushing all over now.

'I bought that dreadful ribbon to try you. I saw it at Crumpet's. Oh ! how we all laughed !'

'Yes—I suppose so.'

'And we caught it, too, when we got home.' And then Miss Anderson told me how angry Miss Fitzsimmons had been, and what tasks were generally distributed ; and I was horrified at the trouble I had caused in a select seminary, and expressed my regrets at once. 'But it was very wrong of you to mock me—to try and make game of anything I was wearing,' she said coquettishly.

'I wouldn't make game of you for the world,' I hastened to say. 'I didn't wear your colours because—because I wanted to mock you. Oh, pray don't think that !'

'Ah ! well, I won't, then. But I didn't know—how could I ?' she said. 'You'll go that way to the town, of course ?'

'Yes, of course. Unless——'

'And I shall go this. Or else Miss Fitzsimmons will see us, and then I shan't be allowed to go out by myself alone again—which is very, very seldom,' she said sadly and demurely.

'Do you often come this way ?'

'Never.'

'Shall you ever come this way again ?'

'I don't think I shall. I don't know, though, for certain. Good afternoon, Master Griffin.'

'Good afternoon, Miss Anderson.'

Then we shook hands and went our separate ways, and my steps were light as air from that hour forth. Miss Ragstaff wondered at my spirits—at the 'exuberance of my verbosity'—that evening ; at my suppressed excitement and general amiability.

'That walk has done you a deal of good, Edwin,' she said to me.

'Yes, it has.'

'I wouldn't give up walking exercise now, if I were you.'

'I don't think I shall, ma'am.'

And I did not. I walked very regularly on the Kewstoke road. The woods were the scene of my romance, of my enchantment: this was fairyland, and fairy life, and I belonged no longer to the world. I saw Miss Anderson every day; by some stratagem or other—she was ingenious in stratagems—'awfully artful,' Griggs would have said—she contrived to meet me, if only for a few moments. We became Edwin and Janie to each other; we became 'engaged' to each other; when she grew up, and I had done growing up, I was to go to India and tell her father that I loved her, and we were to live happily ever afterwards.

It was a boy-and-girl's love, which grew very fast, too. The sentiment that was in me amused her, interested her, sometimes frightened her; and yet, neither of us understood the other from the beginning to the end of our acquaintance. She knew I was very fond of her, and very jealous; she was young enough to think she loved me for my love for her; and we were only children, God knows, nothing more. And in all the good faith of children, with hazy ideas of the great world we were approaching, we made many promises, and kept but few of them. The way of mankind, perhaps, as well as of little people like us.

'And you'll never look at Bamford again,' I said one day to her at the close of the sweet vacation-time for her and me—which was never to come again.

'Why, of course I will not.'

We had had a few words about him, and I had flung myself face foremost on the grass, and cried at last like the baby that I was. And she had become terrified, and had said anything to soothe me.

We kissed and made it up, and went back together hand in hand. It was the last day of the holidays—the girls and boys tomorrow would be streaming from the railway station to the schools.

'I shall always wear your colours, Janie.'

She laughed.

'I shall be careful what I wear, then—or else they'll talk about us,' she replied.

'I shall always wear your colours till I die—I shall indeed,' I said fervently. 'If we were not to meet, oh! for ever so many years, I should wear your colours again, to let you see I loved you just the same, Janie.'

'Oh! you foolish Edwin!'

So we embraced and shed many tears together, and went schoolwards with two full young hearts.

I was not so happy when school had begun again—though we corresponded regularly through the medium of the baker's man, who supplied both seminaries, and was a faithful, trusty, crusty servant. Janie did look at Master Bamford now and then ; I have known her laugh at him even, and for days I have grieved over it, as at an affliction which was irreparable. It was as well we parted, or that fate parted us, suddenly, swiftly, and in an unlooked-for manner—for I have said I was a boy more foolish than my kind, and more extravagant in theory and practice. Janie Anderson's place at church in the middle of the vacation became suddenly vacant, and knew her never more.

I could not believe she was really gone—I had had no note of warning—I was afraid that she was ill. I should see her next Sunday, or before next Sunday in her walks abroad. But I saw her not again. The ranks of the Fitzsimmons's girls were without her bright young face; the pew under the gallery looked very dull and cheerless, and positively empty to me. I felt sick and ill with the consciousness of my great loss—of the loss of one who seemed the only being left me to love, now my mother had married again. I was a boy left alone, if she had left for good.

I got the news from the baker, who, bribed heavily by me, had got the news from Miss Fitzsimmons's cook, who had it from one of the under-teachers.

Miss Anderson had been sent for suddenly—there had been a telegram, and she had left for Southampton, and thence to India, to join her father the nabob.

So the green curtain came down suddenly with a run ; the juvenile play was over, and Cupid, who had fiddled to us so long, packed up his instrument and tripped from the orchestra, and all the lights were turned out rapidly.

II.

EIGHT years afterwards, I was staying for my health at the Grand Hotel, Scarborough. I had been recommended the Yorkshire coast—I had been poorly for six months, perhaps twelve—I had only just stopped growing !

People interested in me thought that I wanted bracing air. My mother, very nervous about me, had come as a fond companion—nurse, if it were needed. The trustee and second husband was dead, and my mother was again a widow, with no thought of

marrying a third time. The second edition of wedlock had been an utter failure; but of that no matter.

I had grown out of all knowledge, my friends said—and I was certainly a very tall specimen of the human race, six feet three without my boots, and with an unpleasant stoop in the shoulders as if I had overdone it, and was bending forward like a badly trained bean-stalk. The law had become my profession, and I was making progress therein when my health gave way. ‘It was only a temporary ailment,’ the doctor assured my mother; over-application to business, combined with rapid growth, had thrown me out of gear. Rest, freedom from anxiety—indeed, perfect idleness—was the only certain cure for her son.

And here, at pleasant, frivolous, bracing Scarborough, I gathered strength, made a few friends, took to dancing of an evening at the hotel, was the delight and pride and comfort of my mother, as a son should be, even in these degenerate days. It was here that I met Bamford again. We should not have recognised each other had it not been for chance allusions at the dinner-table, and then we shook hands with great heartiness, and laughed over school reminiscences till the tears ran down our cheeks. He was very short and stout.

‘Do you intend a long stay?’ I asked.

‘Off and on,’ he replied. ‘I am Yorkshire born and bred—a Bradford man—and I am down here perhaps half-a-dozen times during the year.’

‘Cloth, I suppose?’

‘Yes—cloth.’

‘And I dare say, now, there is an attraction here which brings you to Scarborough so frequently?’

‘Ah!’ he said, displaying his white teeth, ‘I dare say ^bhere is. But I’ll tell you all about it next Saturday-week. You’ll laugh a bit.’

‘Very likely.’

‘I shan’t be here again till Saturday-week. I have only taken the place *en route*—business first, you know.’

‘Certainly—business first.’

‘And I like business. It pays—it is becoming almost respectable!’

He laughed heartily at his own satire—and left me. He seemed a pleasant, hearty, and just a trifle boisterous fellow now—I thought I should be glad when he returned.

Before he returned, I had renewed my acquaintance with another friend from the far-off, happy Weston days—I had met Janie Anderson!

She had arrived at Scarborough with a right royal retinue—she had brought her own carriage, her own horses, her own staff of servants, not to mention a host of friends male and female, old and young, who had come with her to do her reverence, and make her time pass easily.

'The heiress has come again'—they whispered at the hotel—'the Indian lady; she is still unmarried, too—what a time we shall have now!'

'Why shall we?' I inquired.

'She is so full of spirits, so charming a young lady, so fond of light and life and gaiety. We call her the enchantress.'

'Indeed!—and her father?'

'Oh! he died years ago in India—and left her every penny of his money. And it's lucky there's no end to it, for she knows how to spend it.'

I felt very strange—strange and uncomfortable—at this account of Miss Anderson. My boy-love had gone with my boy-life, perished from inanition, but there *were* reminiscences that made my cheek flush and my heart throb. I had been so very foolish and sentimental a boy-lover—I had loved her, for a boy, so very much indeed.

I did not introduce myself to her as the long-lost Edwin—I did not renew the acquaintance even on the first evening, when she was in the ball-room dancing vigorously, and none the worse for her long journey from town.

She was still *petite*, and she was very, very pretty. I smiled to think how brightly she was dressed, and how the brightness of it became her olive skin. I smiled still more to find what a complete stranger I was to her—and how there was not a trace of her old sweetheart left in me. I think I should have known her anywhere myself.

The next day she was talking to my mother in the drawing-room. She made innumerable friends, and was wholly without affectation. Riches had not spoiled her.

'What a charming young lady she is!' my mother said to me afterwards. 'I will introduce you this evening, Edwin. Indian princesses are not to be met with every day.'

'She is English.'

'Yes—but how you can tell, I don't know. They call her the Indian princess here.'

'Indeed!'

My mother introduced me in the course of the next night. Miss Anderson was a blaze of diamonds on that special occasion, and it was a regular formal, high-priced ball, in aid of some local

charity, which was taking place that night. She did not even remember my name, or at least associate me with her old sweetheart. We were dancing a quadrille together, when I asked her suddenly if she did not recollect me. I was amused by her long steady stare at me.

'Was it at Bombay?' she asked. 'I remember a gentleman who was very tall and th——who was very tall, some four years ago in India.'

'No—it wasn't at Bombay.'

'Where, then?' she asked quickly, and in her old sharp, girlish way; 'do tell me.'

'Don't you recollect the name?'

'Well, I forget what yours is,' she said, laughing, as she looked down at the programme. "E. G."—that stands for *exempli gratiâ*, does it not? I was taught so at school.'

'Yes—and it stands for Edwin Griffin too.'

'Edwin Griffin,' she exclaimed, 'of Weston-super-Mare—of Doctor Ragstaff's seminary for young gentlemen! Is it really?'

'Really it is.'

She clapped her hands and laughed so loudly and musically that the remaining sections of the set looked with surprise at her excitement.

'What fun! Oh! I am so glad to meet you, after all these years. *Our turn.*'

After we had had our turn, she said,

'You *did* keep growing, then—don't you remember?'

'Yes.'

'And oh! what a couple of sillies we were,' she cried. 'I am afraid, very much afraid, that I led you into all the nonsense. Oh! I was a dreadful young creature, and a great trouble to poor Miss Fitzsimmons.'

This was the beginning of life number two together, then;—I hardly knew if I thought she had improved—I was not quite certain till after supper that my heart rejoiced to see her very greatly.

The next day I was sure it did, but then I had danced with her four times after supper—once by stratagem, she having boldly and maliciously cut out, or forgotten, a very bald old gentleman old enough to be her grandfather, and who had been careering about on his dear old volatile legs all the evening.

'It will do him good to have a bit of a rest,' she said, as we were whirling round and round in the last waltz but two.

Yes—it was a wonderfully happy week—the next was verging upon dream-land again. There was no sentiment about Miss

Anderson now; she was full of fun and dash, with an unpleasant habit of turning everything into ridicule, good-tempered ridicule though it might be. Upon the world about her, its little trials, temptations, victories, and heart-burning jealousies, she looked out with a laughing face on which no shadows rested. Never a maiden with so little care, perhaps. Was I falling in love with her again—with a love that might be dangerous to me at last? Were the old fancies, the past follies, to troop back with their legions as in the boy's dreamland from which in his heart he may not have thoroughly awakened? I felt so like the boy again! the halcyon days of Kewstoke Woods seemed to be eight years nearer to me.

'Do you remember the colours?' she said one day.

'Every one of them.'

'The lemon with red spots?'

'Ah!—that was a crisis in my life.'

'In your school-life—ah! yes.'

'In my life altogether—perhaps.'

She looked quickly at me—the deep brown eyes were difficult to meet, before the long black lashes veiled them.

'What a hot day, is it not? And I have a long ride before dinner with half-a-dozen friends. Good day for the present, Mr. Griffin.'

We did not meet till late that night. I was dull and dispirited for reasons not to be accounted for clearly. When I came down from my room that Saturday evening, I preferred to lean against the door-post and watch the dancers. She was dressed in amber and black, and looked more pretty than I dared to seriously consider. I remembered, suddenly and oddly, an amber-and-black silk neck-tie with which my mother had presented me—the colours almost matched, I thought a little grimly. She looked at me and smiled, as she passed me in the dance; I went immediately and madly to my room, put on my frock coat, changed back from evening to morning dress as more appropriate to my new costume, and arranged my amber-and-black tie upon my chest in the old boy fashion.

The old, old conceit—the old romance! She would remember, for she had remembered everything.

Would she recollect the last day of our romance?—the last words that I said, almost?

'If we weren't to meet, oh! for ever so many years, I should wear your colours, to let you see I loved you just the same, Janie.'

And in the gay colours of that night I stood at the door and watched her and loved her once again, I fear.

She came towards me at last, on the arm of my old school-

MISS ANDERSON'S COLOURS.

22
fellow, Will Bamford, who had returned to Scarborough. Always an officious, pushing fellow, he had soon obtained an introduction to the Indian princess, it seemed. I wondered how long it would be before he recognised her.

She looked at me as she approached, started, and then turned away her head, and coloured very much.
‘What’s the matter, Janie?’ said Bamford; ‘your hand is trembling like an aspen.’

‘The dancing has fatigued me.’

‘I was going to introduce you to an old schoolfellow of mine.’

‘I have been introduced days ago, William. Now,’ she said, looking up with her old bright, steady gaze, ‘it is my turn to do the honours. Mr. Griffin, this is my future husband, Mr. Bamford.’

‘Well, that’s odd,’ said Bamford; ‘I was going to say my future wife. I dare say, Griffin, it will surprise you a good bit to know that Miss Anderson went to school at dear old Weston.’

‘No, it will not,’ I answered hoarsely.

‘Oh! we were all very foolish at dear old Weston,’ she murmured, ‘and full of idle fancies. It is well that children’s fancies never last.’

She looked at her colours near my heart, and then at me, and smiled and shook her head. It was all over, I knew; and it was lucky for me that I knew so quickly and completely.

My mother and I left Scarborough the next week. When I met my lady-love again, she was a pretty woman of thirty, but getting as stout as her husband, and there were half a dozen children romping round her knees.

F. W. ROBINSON.



Nancy of the Mill.

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Nancy of the Mill.

SINCE first I saw I loved
 The lass whom still I follow ;
 Too long my heart had roved
 With fickle vows and hollow ;
 But now shall rest, whate'er molest,
 In truthful peace and still,
 On that dear maid, so shy and staid,
 Sweet Nancy of the Mill.

'Twas on a morn of spring
 That I went out a-roving,
 To hear the blackbirds sing
 Their mellow tale of loving ;
 To watch how green the hedgerow screen
 Was growing, how the quiver
 Of flag and reed and grass agreed
 With semblance in the river.

When, dreaming by the brook,
 A sweet voice, gaily humming,
 Made idle eyes uplook,
 My short breath quickly coming ;
 Upon the plank that joined each bank,
 Who now my heart doth fill,
 I saw her stand, and heart and hand
 Were Nancy's of the Mill !

Red-ripe as apple blossom
 Each lip and ruddy cheek,
 Like cherry bloom her bosom,
 Her hair like raven's beak.
 She looked me through, my pride she slew,
 And passed, but gazing still
 I lay and dreamed, and near me seemed
 Sweet Nancy of the Mill !

B. MONTGOMERIE RANKING.

The Understudier.

I.

THE lot of Signor Dibini was cast amongst the great ones of the earth. His daily acquaintances were emperors, kings, brave men and fair women. He knew several illustrious captains and at least five famous cardinals. They were clad in purple and fine linen, and lived sumptuously every day—or rather, every night. They sat down to banquets that pleased the eye, if they were somewhat fibrous to the taste. They drank cold tea out of beakers, called their servants varlets, and performed most daring actions, sometimes of personal bravery, occasionally of infinite rascaldom. Murder was a matter that happened amongst them six days a week. They drank poison to slow music, they stabbed each other to the heart with a loud ‘Ha! ha!’ They smothered their wives with the connubial pillow and went off with the wives of other men. A roystering, boisterous, crafty, wealthy, impecunious, murderous, iniquitous, virtuous crew, whose life was a short and not always a merry one. A community with whom the great moral, legal, or physical influences which control the ordinary human race worked with surprising rapidity and unerring certainty.

Jonadab Dibbins lived at the blighted end of Waterloo Bridge Road; a lean and careworn man, carrying a prodigious height of forehead, with frontal development like a bay-window, generally understood in the Dibbins household to portend enormous but restrained ability. The Dibbins household was numerous, and select to the extent that the great majority of its members were of tender years. Anyone straying into the little apartment which served as breakfast-room, dining-room, and drawing-room, might reasonably have thought that he had hopped upon a *crèche*, and if he had remained throughout the day must have wondered when the children were to be called for. But nobody ever called for them of late, not even Death, who is more attentive upon households where there is more to eat and a more liberal distribution of clothing. All told, there were nine. If all had lived, there would have been eleven. Two had died, one consequent upon teething, another in the public streets, sacrificed to the Moloch of a brewer’s dray.

This happened when the Dibbinses lived in Drury Lane, and it had led to their moving to the Waterloo Bridge Road. It was neces-

sary for professional reasons that Mr. Dibbins should have his domicile somewhere near the Strand. A court he held to be unhealthy. Mrs. Dibbins, with the fate of her second-born fresh before her eyes, would not live in a thoroughfare; so they arrived at the compromise of residing in Waterloo Bridge Road, one of the main arteries of London which has not yet recovered from the blighting influence of the toll-bridge.

At first Mrs. Dibbins suffered unnumbered anxieties in consequence of the Waterloo 'bus. This public convenience was, in fact, directly responsible for the appearance of a seventh Dibbins at least ten days before he was due. In the earlier weeks of the tenancy the neighbours were constantly diverted by seeing a pale, anxious little woman, with her sleeves turned up and an apron on, diving into the middle of the road and rescuing from imminent peril (from a 'bus not yet in sight) whole handfuls of children who seemed so near the same age that it was impossible to suppose they were all her own. But they were; and though house-room was circumscribed, there seemed no limit to the possibilities of her affection for morsels of humanity that to the cold eye of the stranger were not attractive.

Jonadab was in his thirty-fifth year, and might have been anything at all over that age. He was the sort of man that never grows old-looking after the fashion of ordinary mortals. He had neither whiskers nor moustache to turn grey; and as for his hair, his forehead was so stupendously high and so aggressively prominent that hair was quite a secondary consideration. Now I turn my mind upon the subject, I remember he had some, but what colour it was or how worn I have no recollection. In his more depressed moments, Jonadab was inclined to regard Mrs. Dibbins resentfully. He had never read the older French grammaticists, and had never heard of Tiraqueau, the great French lawyer. Yet there was a bond of union between the Frenchman and Jonadab.

Tiraqueau, whilst drinking water,
Has an annual son or daughter.

Such had been the fate of Jonadab through an uninterrupted period of years. He had been married eleven years, and but for the accidents mentioned there would have been at this moment just as many little Dibbinses. As it was, Jonadab found nine enough, and Mrs. Dibbins sometimes discovered that they were more than enough. But neither complained, and it was only in moments of exceptional depression that Jonadab found himself scoffing at the blessed state of the man who hath his quiver full of them.

There does not appear at first sight much in common between Signor Dibini, the associate of kings, the friend of emperors, the witness of many secret crimes, and poor Jonadab Dibbins with his noble forehead and his nine children. And yet there was the closest possible relation, for they were one and the same person. Signor Dibini was Jonadab's professional name. He was a member of the company of the Theatre Royal, Wellington Street, though you might look in vain through the list of performers for his name. Signor Dibini, in fact, occupied a position in the company the existence of which is, perhaps, even unknown to the light-hearted *habitué* of the theatre who takes his place in the stalls and expects everything to go on right on the stage before him. Signor Dibini's professional existence was a striking proof of the provision necessary for the carrying on of a great theatre. He was an understudier, that is to say, it was his business to *understudy* some of the principal parts, so that if, in case of sudden illness or accident, the actor to whom a part was assigned was not able to put in an appearance, Jonadab took his place. Often he had learned two or three parts in the same piece, learning every word, making himself familiar with cues, and ready to step on the stage at an hour's notice. Every night he was down at the theatre, and saw safely on the stage the men whose parts he had *understudied*.

Jonadab was an ambitious man. He felt that within him which told him that, give him the chance, there should step forth on the stage such a Hamlet as the world had not yet seen. The same remark applies, with only less degree of emphasis, to Louis XI., Richelieu, and a score of the principal characters of the stage. But for Hamlet Jonadab thought that, in addition to many graces of mind, Nature had peculiarly gifted him in the matter of presence.

It will easily be understood, when his manner of life is made known, that, quite apart from the nine ever-open mouths at home, Jonadab had a good deal to make him careworn. When a man has the certainty that, given him a chance, he will blaze before the world in the meteoric flight of genius, when that chance ever seems within his grasp and as constantly eludes it, we have the conditions of life that write wrinkles on the brow, lend a stoop to the shoulder, and dull the brightness of the eye.

Jonadab was of an immensely sanguine temperament, or he never would have lived for the great occasion to which, at the time this chronicle opens, he was swiftly tending. He had at his tongue's end all of what may be called the stock parts. A glance over the prompter's books brought back to his mind all the dark sayings of Hamlet and the rotund utterances of ~~the rest~~ Where

the sanguine disposition came especially into play was when he had a new part to learn. This did not happen very often, as the Theatre Royal in Wellington Street was prosperous, and when a new piece was placed on the stage it remained there for one or two hundred nights. But new pieces came, and Jonadab threw himself into the understudy with unabated vigour. He felt his time would come at last, and it behoved him to be ready for it. A false step in the street, a sudden cold, a carriage accident, and great people might be laid low and modest merit might step forth on the stage to retire amidst the plaudits of an amazed audience.

Fortune, it is written, comes to those who know how to wait. Jonadab had waited he knew not how long. Certainly for thirteen long years he had been ready and even yearning. But fortune had passed him by, touching with capricious hand others who Jonadab thought had not waited so long, and who he was sure had not hoped so passionately. He knew men who had been supers in country theatres, who were now stars and even managers of prosperous theatres. For him, alas! came no sunshine, and had it not been for the constant 25s. a week which his post brought him in, he would have given up the long stern chase. But yearly there came an additional reason why he could not afford to dispense with 25s. a week. So he waited on, learned his parts, and struggled with murderous thoughts as he saw Hamlet come tripping down the dark staircase to his dressing-room, and thought how changed might be the world supposing he were some time to leave by chance a bucket midway on the stairs, over which Hamlet tripping might sprain his ankle, and the anxious manager would rush about the recesses of the stage calling on the name of Dibbins.

II.

ONE night in January, Jonadab crossed Waterloo Bridge at an unusually rapid pace. His head was erect, his shoulders were squared, and he whistled cheerfully as the wind, dodging round the stone recesses, caught him as he emerged beyond their shelter. It was nine o'clock and, he was going home. As he reached the lower end of the road, and came among his own people, the neighbours stopped to look at him—firstly, because this was an unusual time for him to be seen in the neighbourhood of home; and secondly, because he was a changed man.

‘Dibbs has had a fortin left him,’ said Mrs. Perks to Mrs. Perkins, as Jonadab passed the little shop where all kinds of edibles were sold, from salt herrings to very large potatoes.

Mrs. Perkins was glad of this, as the Dibbins debt was deep.

Not that they did not pay ready money, but somehow or other the account was always slipping backward, and what they paid last Saturday was really on account of provisions obtained nine weeks earlier.

'He's more like had a drop to drink,' said Mrs. Perkins, not deeming it wise to rest too strongly on the cheerful view so suddenly adopted by her neighbour.

'Well, father, what brings you home so early?' said Mrs. Dibbins, as Jonadab strode into the room and eyed her with the searching look with which Hamlet watches the king and the queen his mother during the players' scene.

Mrs. Dibbins was always ready to be alarmed, and when Jonadab, instead of replying, continued to gaze at her in abstracted manner, she concluded that the worst had happened and immediately began to count the children.

'Mother,' said Jonadab, 'we have waited long and are now to be rewarded. Fortune has condescended to look at me with half an eye, and half an eye is better than no turn of the optic. I have a part, my dear. No longer do I understudy others, though perhaps it would be too much to say that I am to have my part understudied. Still, I'm cast for an essential part, go on at the crisis, and what's more, the part has never been treated artistically. I shall develop it.'

'Is it Hamlick?' Mrs. Dibbins asked, beginning to cry—an unfailing resource in whatever mental disturbance befell her.

'No, my dear, it's not Shakespeare, it's the *Corsican Brothers*.'

'Are you the Brothers?' said Jonadab junior, called Johnny by his mother, and Sprouts by the youth of the neighbourhood who were aware of his business engagement at a greengrocer's at the Butts.

'No, it's not the Brothers; I'm not sorry for it, as the part is hackneyed. I am cast for the Doctor, and I mean to make something of it. You know, mother, it often happens that what are called minor parts, when properly played, turn out the chief thing in the piece. There was Lord Dundreary. That was a mere accessory that no manager would have had understudied. When the piece first came out, if Sothern hadn't turned up to time it could have been cut out and the play would have been just as good. But Sothern worked it up until it became the piece itself, and that's what I mean to do with the Doctor. The piece will run for a hundred nights; if I can't do something in a hundred nights I will retire from the profession. My dear, this is an occasion that should have its libation. We will carouse. John, fetch hither from the neighbouring establishment three

pigs' feet, and also a pot of 'alf and 'alf, which is fourpence in your own jugs.'

Jonadab was light of heart and inclined to be merry ; Mrs. Dibbins' joy was tempered by the certainty that something would go wrong at the last moment. To the children the gaiety of the evening was eclipsed only by the exceedingly moderate satisfaction to be got out of the ninth part of a pig's foot divided with whatever strict impartiality by Johnny. On the other hand, it had come to them quite unexpectedly. They were just going to bed, and were lingering over a crust of dry bread with intent to put off the evil hour as far as possible ; when home comes father in highest spirits, gives reckless orders for refreshment, and has not yet made the discovery that they are all up. That will come by-and-by, and they will have to troop miserably to bed. In the mean time, they sucked their bones, they had rich remainders from their parents' plates, and before they retired to rest had the satisfaction of hearing their father sing 'My Johnny was a shoe may-KER,' which Mrs. Dibbins thought he did much better than Toole. But he said diffidently, from the depths of the now nearly empty pot of half-and-half, 'No, he thought not.'

The fact was, Toole was not in his line. If he had been, no one could say what might have happened in the way of rivalry. But Jonadab thought his style a little low. There *was* a style, now, which if pressed Jcnadab might have admitted he could trifle with. But he never mentioned it, and it was only those coming upon him unexpectedly when he was learning a part, who heard him bring his voice from somewhere near the top of his head, biting his words in two and swallowing one half with a gulp—only those who heard this, or saw his awkward walk, dragging his left leg after him as if it were partially paralysed—only these could guess who his Model and Rival was.

III.

SPROUTS, the first-born of the illimitable Dibbins family, was unquestionably the most notable of the brood. None of the rest rose above mediocrity, except it were the baby, who had developed an astonishing talent for swallowing small articles of hardware without apparent inconvenience.

'Everything goes to its mouth,' the mother said lovingly, and not without a certain measure of pride, seeing that there was strong reason to believe that the child had swallowed a threepenny-bit, incautiously left within its reach on the table. Threepenny-bits were not to be thus lightly disposed of in the Dibbins household,

and it was only after looking high and low that this conclusion was arrived at.

If Sprouts had been at home, it would not have happened. Nothing did happen wrong within his ken. At the moment of the suspected catastrophe Sprouts was ‘cleanin’ his boots.’ They were not really his own, being the possession of a middle-aged gentleman who lodged in Kennington Lane. But Sprouts always called them ‘my boots,’ having in them that measure of possession involved in daily presenting them with a new polish.

This was only one of numerous engagements he held, concurrently with the necessity, rigorously imposed upon him by law, of going to school twice a day. The first thing in the morning Sprouts ‘lit his fires’ that is to say, he went to the house where the middle-aged gentleman lodged, and lit the fires. After this he came home, had his breakfast, and went off to school, where he was due at nine o’clock. When he came out at noon he went to clean his boots, then home to dinner, school again in the afternoon, and in the evening was open to engagements on odd jobs by the neighbours.

Failing these, Sprouts occupied himself in other ways of a semi-public character. He belonged to the Band of Hope, to whose funds he subscribed at the rate of a penny a month, and had a free tea once a year, besides certain moral advantages. Of late there had come in his way a bill calling for volunteers for the chorus at the Crystal Palace. Sprouts, finding time hang heavy on his hands, joined the chorus, understanding that on payment of six-pence he was to have tuition in singing, and on the ‘Messiah’ day was to be conveyed to and from the Crystal Palace free of charge.

But his great day was Saturday, and it was in connection with the labours of this day that he had earned the sobriquet by which he was popularly known. Being free from school on Saturday, Sprouts was able to devote his colossal energies to the furtherance of a greengrocery business at the Butts. This necessitated his rising at four o’clock in the morning, and accompanying the van to Covent Garden. At first, Sprouts’ duties were limited to remaining on the van whilst a more mature greengrocer went in search of purchases. He had to be on the look-out, first, to prevent incursions of thieves, and secondly, to answer the hail of porters bringing to the van purchases made in different parts of the market.

It was this that brought home to Sprouts the urgent necessity of having ‘a back in.’

‘If you don’t get a back in,’ Sprouts explained to his marvelling mother and the assembled family, ‘they can’t find you, and then they have to carry the sacks all round the other carts.’

Sprouts never went to bed on Friday night without this grave necessity weighing upon his mind. If they were last at market, the other carts would get a back in, and Smithson would be at a disadvantage. A start at four would secure the desired position, and often Sprouts, waking at three and dressing by the light of the little lamp he had placed by his bed over-night, went off to rouse his master and help to get the horse in.

It will be well understood that with all these engagements Sprouts was a youth of substance. His income, indeed, was stupendous. He had a shilling a week for lighting the fire; eighteen-pence a week was his fee for cleaning the boots of the middle-aged gentleman, brushing his clothes, and going occasional errands; whilst his Saturday's work brought him in eightpence. This last does not seem much. But then, as Sprouts remarks with glistening eyes, he has four meals in the day, and endeavours to do his duty in respect of them, as indeed he does in all else that comes in his way.

Sprouts was eleven years of age, and small for his years. He had a singularly bright pair of eyes, and one of the most knowing smiles ever carried by human being. Sometimes, if you chanced to walk on a Saturday in the neighbourhood of Newington Butts, you might have your attention attracted by a large basket coming down the street. Then you would become conscious of a smile, following which cue you would come upon a mouth, and afterwards would quite clearly make out behind the basket a very small boy, hitched on one side for the more convenient carrying on his hip of the loaded basket. This would be Sprouts going out 'on a errand,' life glowing to him with the recollection of a successful 'back in' achieved in the morning.

Sprouts got home late on a Saturday night, and if much pressed would admit to being a little tired. But he was up and off at seven in the morning to do his fires and clean his boots, which he was accustomed to accomplish in time to come home, dress himself all in his best, and either take charge of the household, or go to church, as it might happen to be his turn with his mother.

On a particular Sunday morning, early in this current year, Sprouts could hardly clean the middle-aged gentleman's boots by reason of the strong excitement that swayed him. The next day was Monday, and on that momentous night the wrongs of long years were to be atoned. His father was to appear on the stage, not by the chance of evil having befallen someone else, but in his own proper character solemnly assigned to him. On going to market the previous morning, Sprouts had beheld, with

swelling breast, a bill attached to the door of the Theatre Royal, Wellington Street. In the long list of names appeared this line:

SURGEON. . . *Signor Dibini.*

Sprouts' smile on this occasion was really dangerous to look at.

'You'll split up some day, Sprouts my lad,' old Smithson said, himself not displeased to be, however remotely, connected with a gentleman whose professional name appeared in type so big that even he could read it.

On this same day Sprouts had done what had never happened to him before. Being sent out to Mrs. Chelsea's with two pounds of potatoes, and having in the same basket three cauliflowers for Mrs. Nelson, he left the cauliflowers at the Chelseas' and the potatoes at the Nelsons'. Also on Sunday he had put blacking on the kid tops of the middle-aged gentleman's boots, though well knowing that such an irregularity, if detected, would drive the middle-aged gentleman mad.

IV.

He wanted to get done early now, so that he might get home and form one of a jury of taste to decide a knotty point. It was not without some feeling of disappointment that Mrs. Dibbins and Sprouts had ascertained the precise character that father was to fill in the *Corsican Brothers*. The artist himself had been reticent on the subject. But knowing that they would sooner or later behold him in the act of performing, he felt the necessity of making a clean breast of it. The fact is, as everyone who has seen the *Corsican Brothers* will know, the Doctor, though a highly important personage, comes on only in one scene, and utters but a single sentence. This happens after the duel, when, kneeling down by the side of the wounded man, he pulls out his watch, looks at it, and raising his eyes to heaven observes—

'He has but five minutes to live.'

This was not much; but, as Jonadab said, these minor parts, as projected by the author, are frequently transformed by the genius of the performer into the part of the piece. What Jonadab had long discussed was the proper place on which emphasis should fall in the enunciation of this declaration. It was no use further deferring decision on this important matter. The rehearsals had taken place, the piece was to open on the following night, and it had been agreed that this Sunday morning should be devoted to hearing Jonadab submit the various readings possible, and taking a decision thereupon.

Sprouts was at home at eleven o'clock, and helped his mother to prepare the room for the private rehearsal. It was Sprouts' notion that it was eminently desirable to reproduce the real theatre as nearly as possible. So, getting together all the chairs in the house, supplemented by boxes and the bucket turned upside down, he banked his brothers and sisters in the remoter end of the room. This, he announced, was the gallery, the *vraisemblance* being considerably promoted by a strong perfume of oranges. This arose from a jorum of peel-water, a drink which has not yet been largely advertised, but which was highly popular in the Dibbins household, and, indeed, generally throughout the neighbourhood. It was produced by the process of boiling orange peel in water, adding a little treacle or brown sugar, and there you were. The street provided a never-ending supply of orange-peel; the only difficulty was to obtain sugar. On a day like this it was forthcoming bountifully; and though the general notion of what was going to happen was but vaguely shaped in the mind of the young Dibbinses, they were quite certain of the peel-water, and moreover enjoyed this excitement of being set forth in rows as if they were personages of importance.

Sprouts had brought in with him a bottle of ginger-beer, which he proposed to open presently when the curtain was rung up, knowing that its pop would sound pleasant and familiar in his father's ears: Sprouts himself was the pit. Mrs. Dibbins and the baby, seated a little to the right, were the boxes. As it was eminently desirable that profound peace should reign during the rehearsal, the baby was provided with the kitchen poker, the smooth knob of which it made violent attempts to swallow. It was an indomitable child, not to be repulsed by early defeat, and it was a well-known axiom of the household management, that 'if you gev baby the poker it would be quiet for the hour together.'

When all was ready, Jonadab entered. It was a full-dress rehearsal, and by the skilful application of burnt cork Jonadab assumed a most professional appearance, which was added to by the skirt of Mrs. Dibbins's black dress, loosely thrown across his throat and over his shoulder, after the manner so familiar to doctors in every-day life. As I have mentioned, the difficulty with Jonadab was as to choice of the precise word on which the emphasis should fall. As there were not many, he meant to try them all. Entering now and coming to a halt right in front of the stage, Jonadab, purporting to take a watch out of his pocket, which he held in his right hand, fixed his eyes gloomily upon the occupants of the gallery, and said in solemn tones:

'He has but five minutes to live.'

This was admirably done, though perfect success was marred by an untoward accident. It was Teddy, the youngest boy but three, upon whom Jonadab's eye gloomily fell. Teddy, not primarily at ease in view of the transmogrification of his father, and fascinated by his regard, took the remark personally, and since it appeared he had only five minutes to live, he decided that he would occupy them in howling. He was immediately joined by his younger sisters, then by a brother a little higher up, till finally the whole gallery was howling, the chorus being complete when the baby, after a brief struggle with its natural preference, temporarily abandoned its attempt to swallow the poker and lent its tuneful voice to the uproar.

'Take them children out,' said Jonadab, throwing off his cloak. 'I have no peace with them night or day. Out with you, every one of you!' And they went forth shrieking, grateful for their own escape, but fearful that they should never more see Sprouts or their mother or the baby.

After this the rehearsal went on quietly and profitably. It was objected to the first reading that it singled out the dying man with unnecessary distinctness, and seemed to imply that others of the bystanders might have seven, or eight, or more minutes to live, whereas he had only five. A kindred objection was raised when Jonadab proposed to read it, 'He has but *five* minutes to live.' To lay the emphasis on either 'has,' 'but,' or 'to' was to waste a point. Mrs. Dibbins rather liked the reading, 'He has but *five minutes* to live.' But Sprouts (from whom all these criticisms have come, though of course not stated in precisely the words set down here) ruled that out of the question.

It was finally arranged that Jonadab was to begin in a low solemn voice, to slightly hesitate when he came to 'five minutes,' as if he were precisely calculating the time, and to lay what emphasis might be left on the word 'live.' This settled, the burnt cork was washed off, the children were readmitted, and Sprouts finally, though not without difficulty, convinced Teddy that 'father was only playing,' and had no designs on his young life.

V.

You may be sure that Mrs. Dibbins and Sprouts were early at the theatre the next night. The doors opened at seven, but six o'clock was chiming from the church in the Strand when they presented themselves at the gallery door with intent to get front seats. It was well they did so, for by half-past six there was quite

a crowd, and by seven o'clock, when the doors were opened, and they were carried in on the crest of a great wave of humanity, Mrs. Dibbins was not sure whether she should ever be able to wear her best dress again.

The opening part of the play was all a dream to Sprouts. He knew that it was not till the last act that his father came on ; but before the first act was over he had forgotten him in the excitement of the play. He heard sometimes a hum of voices near him. He was conscious of a faint smell of oranges. He fancied his mother spoke to him now and then. But it was all as in a dream. With elbows leaning on the edge of the gallery, and his head supported between his hands, Sprouts looked down on the real men and women moving about on the stage below, his mouth wide open for the better taking in of all that passed. His blood froze within him at sight of the apparition in the Château dei Franchi. He was in a whirl of delight at the bright scene in the interior of the Opera House. How he got to Fontainebleau he did not know, and indeed had the vaguest idea of where Fontainebleau was. But it was a place with real trees, such as he had seen in Kennington Park, only the ground was covered thick with snow —real snow, for he saw the men kick it about as they walked. Then the fearful fight ! the flashing swords, the deadly thrust, and the fallen man ! Sprouts was horror-stricken that such things should be ; and of course no policeman about. Just the same as in Waterloo Bridge Road, never a policeman when he was wanted.

Sprouts' heart had ceased to beat when he watched the gay well-dressed man who had been so nasty and had killed the other man, now himself fall back, whilst the red blood gushed from the wound on his left breast and stained his white shirt. But his heart leaped up with a great throb when he saw a familiar figure enter and walk slowly across the stage. His father was splendidly dressed ; a fine black hat, a real black cloak, and such stately tread with just a little drawing of the left leg as if it were paralysed. Sprouts fancied he had seen the same gesture somewhere before in the play, but he could not at the moment identify the recollection.

He knew it was a play now, for here was his father on the stage, and all this great crowd to look at him. Were they excited? Could they believe that gentleman in the black cloak and the fine hat was his father ? Mrs. Dibbins was dissolved in tears. She began to cry the moment Jonadab appeared. But Sprouts was too much accustomed to this phenomenon to notice it. He saw the great crowd behind him ranged tier above tier, and every man and woman with eyes fixed steadfastly on the stage—upon the stately figure in the black cloak, Sprouts was certain.

Jonadab suffered himself to be led up to the place where the wounded man lay. He knelt on one knee, took his wrist between his fingers, and producing a watch—a real watch provided by the property-man—he looked straight up at the gallery, fixing his eyes upon Sprouts precisely as on the previous day he had paralysed the unfortunate Teddy. But now it seemed it was his own turn to be paralysed. A fearful silence fell upon the stage and pervaded the house. There knelt Jonadab with the dying man's wrist between his fingers. The rest of the players stood grouped round, the next man waiting for the cue which Jonadab's exclamation was to provide him with. Here was the long-looked-for opportunity, and Jonadab was dumb! Sprouts noticed with growing terror that the muscles of his father's face were working convulsively. His eyes were fixed and glazed. His lips moved as if trying to form words, but no syllable did he utter. Then the truth flashed upon Sprouts. His father, in the deadly excitement of the moment, had forgotten his speech. The memory that had served him through the longest speeches in *Hamlet* now played him false.

Tags of innumerable speeches crowded upon the unhappy man's memory. He felt he must say something, and the words that seemed to form themselves upon his lips and to free his articulation were Hamlet's soliloquy on death. In another second he would have commenced, 'To be or not to be,' when a shrill voice coming from the gallery filled the house.

'He has but five minutes to live.'

It was Sprouts! How he came to utter the words he knows no more than his father can explain how they froze in his recollection. However this be, Sprouts saved his father. The spell was broken, Jonadab's tongue was loosed, and in solemn accents that filled the house and rolled through the dim recesses of the roof, calling forth a distinct round of applause, he said as he let the dying man's hand fall—

'He has but five—minutes—to live.'

The play was an immense success, and when the newspapers came out the next morning it was found that the critics had felt constrained to spare a few words of recognition of the strikingly original manner in which Signor Dibini had played the comparatively small part of the Doctor.

'Signor Dibini,' a morning journal wrote, 'is if we mistake not new to the stage. But we venture to predict for him a distinguished future. We have frequently witnessed the performance of this legendary drama. But we confess that till last night we had never noticed the relatively insignificant part of the Doctor.'

The stately manner of Signor Dibini's approach, the solemn pause that preceded his utterance, and the thrilling tones with which he announced the approaching end of Château-Rénaud were evidences slight but conclusive of supreme genius. A child in the gallery paid a simple but striking tribute to the masterfulness of the representation by echoing with shrill voice the brief sentence of death.'

The echo, as we know, went before the speech; but that is a mere detail.

HENRY W. LUCY.

The Duke and the Duchess.

I.

At a garret window, the red gold rays of the setting sun illuminating and flushing him, sat an old man in a curved attitude, busily engaged, completely absorbed : he was mending a pink silk stocking. His bony, sallow, yet tapering and shapely fingers plied the darning-needle not unskilfully ; he was arresting the progress of an unlucky ‘ladder’ which had begun to scar the calf of his hose. From his position he looked down upon a narrow London thoroughfare, whence mounted various street sounds, the beat and patter of footsteps, the rattle and thunder of wheels, and the murmurous echoes of human speech. It was summer weather, and the casement was thrown wide open ; a soft warm air, coursing over a wide panorama of red-tiled roofs and towering chimney-stacks, blew freely into the room—too freely, perhaps : for presently the old man, shivering a little, with a shrug of his shoulders, was moved to close the window.

He was of middle height, but rather thin, with a worn, wrinkled, pallid face and pinched features ; yet he owned a curious look of refinement and distinction. It was clear that he had once been handsome, if his title to that advantage was now scarcely so unimpeachable as it had been. The fire of his black eyes was not yet wholly quenched ; his smile was still pleasant, although tinged with a certain irony of expression. The colour had fled from his thin lips, but his teeth were still white and even. He moved a little stiffly, as though the weight of his years cumbered him somewhat ; but with a peculiar air of dignity, a natural or habitual grace of mien. He paced the rude bare floor of his garret daintily, as though he despised or distrusted the ground upon which he trod : it was capable of soiling his neatly-shaped, closely-fitting shoes of Spanish leather, with their bright buckles of cut steel.

The room was small, and but poorly furnished. In one corner stood a truckle bed covered with a patchwork quilt ; a small-sword rested upon two nails above the narrow mantel-board ; from a peg swung a guitar adorned with a soiled blue silk ribbon. An embroidered coat, a trifle frayed and rubbed about the seams and button-holes, hung upon the back of a rush-bottomed chair. A deal table strewed with papers was placed near the window, beside

a small wash-stand, supporting a chipped basin and a handle-less jug. A black box or two lurked in the shadow of the acute angle formed by the sloping of the roof towards the floor.

The task of mending was completed. The old man surveyed his handiwork with a half sad, half contemptuous air of approval, then tossed the repaired silk stocking on to the bed. He then took from one of his boxes, in the corner of the room, a clean shirt of fine linen, with a worked and frilled front, and wristbands richly laced and ruffled; a waistcoat of puce-coloured silk, patterned over with rose-buds, and a pair of knee-breeches of black satin. It was clear that he was about to make a toilet of some elaboration and splendour. He did not hasten to begin, however; glancing at his finery from time to time, he paced the floor up and down, from door to fire-place; up and down the confined room, with a pause now and then at the window to consult the clock upon a neighbouring church tower, the while he shielded his eyes with his hands as though his sight was weak and the distance tried it. He was expecting some one.

'He is late,' he murmured, as, after gazing at the clock, he resumed his walk. 'If he should not come! If he has forgotten! If he has deceived me! *Peste!* I must bear it. I have borne heavier troubles. Ah! a step on the stairs? No; I deceive myself. Yes! A tap at the door. *Entrez, Monsieur!*'

The door opened. A pleasant-looking gentleman in a snuff-coloured suit, with silver buttons, stood upon the threshold. He raised his laced three-cornered hat as he entered.

'Pardon me, Monsieur le Duc, if I am late,' he said.

'It is but a minute, M. Kelly. Do not speak of it, I pray you.'

'There are so many to buttonhold a manager, to waylay him, to question him; there is so much to be said and done at the last moment. Between the opera and this house in Swallow-Street, a walk of five minutes only, I have been stopped fifty times, by this one, by that, now upon one pretext, now upon another. But I am here at last.'

'And you are welcome, M. Kelly. I completed my task some time since. I rose at daylight that I might not fail. Ten sheets of music, fairly copied, at one shilling per sheet.'

'It is with shame I tender you the amount, Monsieur le Duc.' Thereupon the gentleman addressed as M. Kelly placed a little pile of silver upon the table.

'It is with joy I receive it, M. Kelly: the first money I ever earned in my life! Should I be ashamed to take my wages, or you to pay them? Is not the copy neatly made? I took

pains, let me tell you. There is not a blot nor an error of any kind.'

'But it is such a trifle I bring you in return, Monsieur le Duc. The copy is all that could be wished. Work of this kind is but poorly paid, however.'

'I am content, M. Kelly. I ask only to be paid the price you are accustomed to pay the poorest copyist in the service of the opera-house. To pay me more or less would be unjust. The while I am fully sensible of your kindness. You give me employment and you keep my secret. I am poor, as everybody knows; but everybody does not know how poor. A trifle you call this money? It is ten shillings. It will pay my rent, my barber, and my washerwoman; it will buy me bread, and wine, and coffee, hair-powder, and snuff. Nay, more, it enables me to hire a chair when next I dine with His Grace of Queensberry in Piccadilly. Ah, M. Kelly, I owe you much. You are a true gentleman. You see me like this: old, poor, broken, exiled, miserable; yet you do not forget that I am still the Duc de Montignac. Mon Dieu! I am often tempted to forget the fact myself. Yet,' he added as he drew himself up proudly, 'I have yet never stooped to borrow or to beg. Let me work, then, while I can. I am old, but not so very old, and I have still health and spirits. The tears come to my eyes sometimes, but it is in spite of myself. I brush them away and I laugh—at least, I try to laugh. It is not easy always, when the heart aches as mine aches, when one has suffered as I have suffered. But it is enough, surely, that I am sad myself. Why should I seek to make you sad also, M. Kelly? What have you done, that you should be as miserable as I am? What are my troubles, or my country's, to you, M. Kelly? You have brought me more music to copy?'

'These are the band parts in Sacchini's "Armide," shortly to be produced for the first time in England. The first rehearsal is appointed for next week.'

'The copies shall be ready in good time, M. Kelly.'

'I know your industry, Monsieur le Duc. But—we are accustomed to delay at the opera, for this reason or for that. If you are not ready, perhaps it will not matter so very much. There is always some one who is not ready.'

'I will not be that some one. I am new to the calling; a young trader: I cannot afford to be unpunctual. And now from business to pleasure. I am to have the ticket for the opera to-night?'

'Assuredly; with the greatest pleasure. This bone admits you to the manager's box on the pit tier. We play Martini's best work, "La Cosa Rara."

‘Ah, M. Kelly, you are most kind.’

‘The opera will be honoured by the presence of so distinguished an amateur as the Duc de Montignac.’

‘I am an amateur no longer, since I earn money by copying music. It is fortunate that in my youth I was so diligent a pupil of Viotti’s. I was not diligent in many things of a profitable kind. Yet now my musical knowledge brings me food. How little I once thought that would ever come to pass! But so many things have come to pass that I never thought or dreamt of. Revolution, ruin, misery, and despair among them.’

‘Not despair, Monsieur le Duc; not quite so bad as that.’

‘Something very like despair, M. Kelly.’

‘The proverb says that while there is life there is hope.’

‘In my case there is very little hope, M. Kelly,’ said the old man sadly.

‘May I speak frankly?’ asked M. Kelly, after a pause.

‘By all means. A garret should be the very home of frankness. In such a place as this, disguise and reserve are scarcely possible.’ The Duke glanced round his poor confined apartment.

‘If I could show you, Monsieur le Duc, a certain road to prosperity, a safe means of re-establishing your fortunes, of regaining your proper position in society?’

‘Of returning to France?’

‘Alas! I cannot say that. I am speaking only of England.’

‘You would propose to me no dishonourable course?’

‘Monsieur le Duc!’ cried M. Kelly with an upraised hand and an air of remonstrance.

‘Pardon me, M. Kelly. I am so poor, I have sunk so low, I feared I might be thought to have lost all scruples, to be capable of even unworthiness of conduct, to be content to rise upon any terms, at any sacrifice. Poverty and punctiliose are so seldom found to be friends and comrades. But you will kindly explain.’

II.

MR. KELLY cleared his voice, moved to and fro a little, hesitated, drummed upon the crown of his hat, and then began:—

‘There is a lady in the case,’ he said.

‘It seems to me,’ interposed the Duke, ‘that there is a lady in every case.’

‘She is rich.’

‘That does not always happen. She is not young?’

‘She is not old. She has been younger,’

'We have all been younger.' He regaled himself with a delicate pinch of snuff from a small tortoise-shell box bound with silver. 'Do I know her?' he asked carelessly.

'You have seen her, Monsieur le Duc. Or I should rather say, perhaps, that she has seen you, at the opera. Her box is on the first tier facing the manager's box to which I have sometimes had the pleasure of welcoming you, Monsieur le Duc.'

'Well, she has seen me, M. Kelly: and what follows?'

'How shall I tell you? Shall I say that she is susceptible? Shall I describe her as ambitious?'

'Ambitious? Ah, but you have just hinted that she is middle-aged. Youth dreams of love and a cottage; age longs for peace and rest. A middle-aged woman is a dangerous creature: restless, discontented, and, as you say, ambitious and susceptible. Tell me more.'

'Her name is Crump. She is a widow and childless. Of her origin I know nothing. It is probably obscure enough. But, myself an Irishman by birth, I can detect an Irish accent in her speech. The late Crump, an alderman, twice Lord Mayor of London, a grocer at the sign of the Golden Canister in Cheapside, left his widow very handsomely provided for—worth what we call a plum. In truth, Mrs. Crump is prodigiously rich. She has observed Monsieur le Duc at the Opera, and——' M. Kelly paused.

'My *beaux yeux* have impressed her?' suggested the Duke, with a mocking smile.

'Mrs. Crump has permitted herself certain aspirations in regard to Monsieur le Duc. Plainly, Mrs. Crump has indulged in hopes that she might possibly in the future be known to the world as Madame la Duchesse de Montignac.'

'She does me great honour. Her aspirations are most flattering to me and to my rank; perhaps to my rank especially. And Madame Crump has made M. Kelly the confidant of her hopes and plans?'

'She trusted me with her secret in order, I think, that I might betray it.'

'Confidants always confide in their turn. A woman's secret is told that it may be told again and again. It is a secret of Polichinelle.'

'Mrs. Crump is not merely a woman of words and aspirations. She is also a woman of action and spirit. She has discovered the address of Monsieur le Duc.'

'Ah, M. Kelly, you have been indiscreet. It was very well to betray Madame Crump; but to betray me, that was not so well.'

‘Pardon me, Monsieur le Duc ; I do not deserve your reproach. The lady’s course was simple enough. She bade her footman follow you from the Opera-house. The fellow dogged your steps ; he traced you to this house.’

‘What a woman !’

‘More ; she designs to pay you a visit, to address you in person as to her views and desires. She will not be hindered by forms and ceremonies.’

‘Would she carry me by storm ?’

‘As I said, she aspires to be Madame la Duchesse de Montignac. A question of etiquette she will thrust aside or step over. It is even possible that she may call here this evening on her way to the opera.’

‘But she is a woman capable of anything !’

‘I do assure you, Monsieur le Duc, that Madame Crump is no ordinary person. Ah ! I hear wheels : a carriage stops at the door.’ M. Kelly looked from the window. ‘She is here,’ he cried. ‘I recognise her blue and orange liveries.’

‘Here ! Great Heaven !’ exclaimed the Duke excitedly. ‘Here, and I have not made my toilet ! Detain her for five minutes, M. Kelly. For your life, do not let her mount the staircase for five minutes.’

Mr. Kelly hurried from the room. The Duc de Montignac struggled into his fine clothes.

III.

His hasty toilet was still somewhat incomplete, he was flushed and disturbed by the nervousness and excitement of the occasion, when he heard a step upon the stairs, and presently a light tapping upon the outer panel of the door.

‘You’re at home ? May I come in ?’ said a firm, resonant, feminine voice ; and a lady of majestic presence, very grandly dressed, entered the room, her stately train of brocaded silk rustling noisily after her, sweeping the bare deal boards of the garret. She brandished a large fan as she spoke. ‘Monsieur le Duc de Montignac, I believe ?’

‘I am that humble person, at your service, Madame. Pray be seated. I bid you welcome, Madame, to my poor abode. You will understand that it is not altogether of my own choosing. In any case it is honoured by your presence, Madame. Pray believe that I am fully sensible of the distinction your visit confers upon me.’

He bowed gracefully as he spoke, and pressed his ruffled hand upon his breast with a courtly air, the while his keen eyes surveyed

his visitor, taking comprehensive note of her aspect. She was thirty-five, perhaps ; she might even be a year or two more. She was very erect, a large-limbed, grandly-formed woman, with bold dark grey eyes thickly fringed with black lashes. She was handsome in a vigorous, striking, and unrefined sort of way. She was brightly rouged and whitened ; her auburn hair, much frizzed and pomatumed, was smeared with powder of a bluish tint. The cherry colour of her lips, perhaps, owed something to art. Her neck and bosom and wrists blazed with diamonds. Her face was of an Irish type, and when she spoke it was with an Irish accent.

‘Mike Kelly told me I should find you at home, Monsieur le Duc ; and a good fellow is Mike, but a sad chatterbox. When he once begins, faith, there’s no stopping him. He kept me talking at the street-door below till I thought he’d never have done. He’s a good fellow all the same, and I am fond of him.’

‘M. Kelly is a most obliging gentleman. M. Kelly is much honoured by the approval of Madame.’

‘You call him M. Kelly ? I always call him Mike. I’ve known him many years. When he was musical director with old Sherry—that’s Sheridar, you know—at Drury Lane, I was in the ballet.’

The Duke started ; but his natural politeness enabled him to check his surprise.

‘Do I understand rightly ? Madame has been a dancer ?’

‘Why not ?’ she demanded simply. ‘I was not so stout then as I am now. Indeed, I was generally thought to be a very pretty dancer. I was slim enough in those days, and very light of foot.’

‘I am sure that Madame was an adorable artiste,’ said the Duke gallantly.

‘That was old Joe Crump’s opinion, at any rate,’ observed the lady.

‘Old Joe Crump ?’ the Duke repeated with a perplexed air.

‘My husband—my late husband,’ she explained. ‘People always called him old Joe Crump. He was quite a popular character. Everybody liked him.’

‘Including Madame ?’ the Duke asked lightly, as he tapped the lid of his snuff-box.

‘Of course. Wasn’t I his wife ? He was a dear good kind old soul as ever lived. A little too fond of his glass, perhaps ; but, after all, that’s a very pardonable, and even amiable, sort of weakness. And he did not grow quarrelsome in his cups, as some do ; I’ll say that for him ; a little maudlin perhaps, and shaky bout the legs, but otherwise easy enough to manage, after we had

got him round the turn of the staircase. Well, now he's dead and gone, poor old soul. I'm sure I thought I should have cried my eyes out. But I'm better now, of course ; and I left off my mourning when the hot weather came. There's no wearing black in the dog-days ; and crape never did become me. He died, and he left me every halfpenny he possessed. And now I'm a rich woman.'

' Let me congratulate you, Madame Crump.'

' I'm glad to be rich, I need not say. You are poor, Monsieur le Duc,' she added abruptly.

' Madame, the Spanish proverb tells us that love and a cough can never be concealed. There is a third thing that there is no hiding : I mean poverty. I am an *émigré*. I once was rich, I am now miserably poor. A palace was formerly my abode. I am now glad of the shelter of this desolate garret. The terrible sufferings of my native land, the uprising of a maddened populace, the crimes of a gang of infamous desperadoes, have driven me into exile. I am not alone in my sorrows, however. There is a numerous band of refugees now in England, looking always with longing sorrowful eyes towards their homes across the Channel ; homes they are perhaps destined never to know or see again ; homes that are now hopelessly wrecked and pillaged, shapeless masses of shattered walls, charred wood and blistered stone, rubbish and ruin. Where once we lived lives we thought to be harmless and gentle enough, God knows, now grow rank grasses and foul weeds, the toad squats, the lizard creeps, the owl hoots, and maybe the wolf howls. Pardon me. I should not speak of these things to you. But I am carried away, and lose myself, sometimes, when I think of these cruel afflictions that have befallen my fair France. I meant but to say that I am one of many ; that as I suffer, so others suffer. Indeed, there are those who have suffered far more even than I have. For I am almost the last of my race ; I have long been alone in the world. They have to mourn unceasingly dear ones torn from their caresses to be tortured to death or butchered upon the scaffold. We are all of us in the hands of God, or I would demand how long are these infamies to be permitted, these crimes to go unpunished ? But pardon me, I say again. You would explain the object of your visit—the honour you have so unexpectedly conferred upon me, and I have done so little to deserve.'

' May I say first that I pity you most sincerely, Monsieur le Duc ?'

' Ah, Madame, the compassion of a kind heart is like an offering of sweet flowers ; who can say nay to it ?'

' Then I would ask—but sure Mike Kelly has told you all ?'

‘Something he did tell me. But am I to remember or to forget what he said? Or how much shall I remember? How much shall I forget? He said, in the first instance, that you, Madame, had thought of me most kindly, too kindly.’

‘No, not too kindly, Monsieur le Duc; I’ll wager he did not say that. But—you’re a single man, a bachelor?’

‘A widower, Madame. I was married very early in life. My wife was taken from me many years since. She was but twenty-three, poor lady, when she died, bringing into the world a dead child. I thought my troubles then were heavier than I could bear—still, I bore them; as I have borne others since, though they have well-nigh overwhelmed me: for I grow old and infirm.’

‘You did not marry a second time? How shall I say it? You have no wife behind the scenes, kept in a cupboard, a secret from the world, to spring out on a sudden and startle everybody?’

‘Madame, my cupboard is bare of almost everything; certainly it contains nothing of the surprising nature you suggest. I have not married a second time; I have contracted no ties of the kind you mention, if I rightly comprehend you.’

‘Look at this.’ As she spoke she outstretched towards him her hand; her rings sparkled brilliantly in the evening light that poured in at the garret window. It was not a small hand, but it was plump and white and shapely. The Duke, touching it daintily, bent down to press it lightly with his lips.

‘Madame; it is a lovely hand. Mr. Crump was supremely happy in possessing it. He was greatly to be envied.’

‘He left one hundred thousand pounds in the palm of that little hand.’

‘The shrine was worthy of the offering.’

‘If I marry again, I purpose to bestow half my fortune upon my husband. For, in the past, I was chosen; I waited to be asked. Now I mean to choose for myself.’

‘Madame, beauty and wealth have their rights and privileges. It may be that they can hardly do wrong.’

‘To be beautiful and rich is something, no doubt. But to be only a Mrs. Crump the while! One might as well almost be plain and poor. The world looks down upon me. I have heard it said—I have even been told—that I am not a lady. Can you wonder that I sigh for rank and station?’

‘Madame’s aspiration is, I am sure, most reasonable.’

‘Monsieur le Duc, if you marry again, your wife will bear the title of Madame la Duchesse de Montignac?’

‘Without doubt, Madame.’

' Monsieur le Duc, has it never occurred to you to marry again ? '

' Madame, until the temptation comes, who can say that he has power to resist it ? '

They paused for a minute surveying each other. The lady stood erect and composed, fanning herself with stately deliberation. The Duke's head was bowed in a courtly way as he glanced at her from beneath his dark brows, and toyed a little nervously with his snuff-box. A patch of bright colour had mounted to the summit of his cheeks.

' There can be marriage without absolute love, I apprehend,' observed Mrs. Crump calmly.

' It is true, Madame. There can be marriage without love, as there can be love without marriage. Cupid and Hymen should be firm friends and allies, but differences arise now and then between them, and they part company at times even angrily. I have known many marriage feasts to which Love was an invited guest, but he did not attend. He was missed, perhaps ; yet not so very much missed.'

' Monsieur le Duc, look at my hand again. You will see in it fifty thousand pounds in Bank of England notes. If you listen, you can hear how crisply they rustle together. Monsieur le Duc, on the morning of my second marriage that roll of notes passes from my hand to my husband's. Do you understand ? '

' My imagination helps me to see those notes, and, as you say, even to hear their rustling. It is as though they whispered together of the joy they felt in finding so exquisite a resting-place.'

' Plainly, Monsieur le Duc, will you take my hand ? '

' Madame,' he cried, ' I am bewildered, astounded. I am dizzled, blinded. Not by the radiance of the rings, but by the whiteness of the hand.'

She laughed merrily. ' Take it, then, at any rate,' she said, ' to conduct me to my chariot. And oblige me, Monsieur le Duc, by accompanying me to the opera. There is a seat for you in my box. Honour me by accepting it.'

The Duke again pressed her hand to his lips, and gallantly led Mrs. Crump down the narrow staircase to her carriage. On the way—he could not be mistaken—she did not simply weigh or press upon his arm : she squeezed it. Indeed, it almost seemed to him that she pinched it.

IV.

THE noon-day sun shone brightly in St. James's Park. The Mall was crowded with saunterers and idlers. Groups of elderly men sat blinking in the light and warmth like so many cats upon a roof. Others, finding the heat too oppressive, sought the shadow of the red brick walls of Buckingham House.

They interchanged talk in a language not understood of the vulgar; for they were for the most part *émigrés*. They wore prodigious cocked hats, powdered wigs with pigtails, high-collared long-skirted coats, buckled shoes, silk or thread stockings, knee-breeches, and long waistcoats with embroidered flaps; but their clothes were somewhat rubbed and worn, shiny with use, white and napless about the seams. If they were rather shabby of look, however, a certain air of dignity and distinction attended them: they were personages. Many were very old and infirm, with hollowed faces, lack-lustre eyes, pinched features, and attenuated limbs; they took snuff parsimoniously, sometimes from boxes of common tin, or even ragged screws of paper; yet had they a certain polish of manner and grace of bearing, which proclaimed them to be patricians and gentlemen, although in exile and poverty. They had suffered severely; if they were now resigned, they were still eager to listen to any whispering of hope. They were quick to assume an alert *quid nunc* air, when any of their number had news to communicate, or thought he had.

'Intelligence reaches me through a private source,' one murmured hoarsely, holding thin tawny fingers before his meagre tremulous lips, to another who curved a bony hand round his parchment ear, that he might lose no word of his friend's tidings; 'intelligence upon which implicit reliance may be placed. Another effort is to be made.'

'There have been so many efforts!' said the listener sadly.

'De Puisage is astir. La Vendée will rise again. Pitt promises assistance. The English fleet will co-operate. A landing will be effected on the coast of Brittany. There is an army of six thousand ready for action, with equipments for many thousand more. Money in abundance will be forthcoming. But we need commanders. I have a list of men to whom application should be made. What has become of the Marquis de Rosanges?'

'He teaches fencing at a gallery in the Haymarket.'

'Where is the Chevalier de Péringny?'

'He dresses salads for the English milors.'

Enquiry was made concerning other *émigrés*. One, it appeared, was teaching languages; another, the guitar and violoncello; a third was prospering as a trader: he had invented a new kind of blacking, composed of charcoal, gum arabic, oil of cocoanut, and curaçoa, which had found much patronage.

‘And the Duc de Montignac?’

A laughing answer was made: ‘They say he has married or is to marry a rich wife, and therefore he cannot come.’

‘Hush! surely that is he now entering the Mall. Who is the young man with him?’

‘The Vicomte de Saint-Géry. He is the affianced husband of Mademoiselle Hélène de Birac; but, in these times, how can the marriage take place? The Vicomte earns his livelihood as a tutor. He reads French with the undergraduates at Oxford. It is said that Mademoiselle de Birac will take the veil. She has already entered the Convent of the Sacred Heart at Hammersmith.’

‘She is related to the Montignacs, is she not? She has the Duke’s eyes.’

‘Hush, for Heaven’s sake. She is no relation of the Montignacs. She is his *filleule* only. But I have heard it whispered that he positively adored the late Marquise. Poor woman! She was a prisoner in La Force, and died—you remember? Ah!’

‘Hush!’

V.

THE Duc de Montignac, with lowered brows and compressed lips, altogether very solemn and sad of face, leant upon the arm of his friend the Vicomte de Saint-Géry, a handsome young man, of brown complexion with ardent black eyes. They turned towards the least frequented part of the Mall.

‘You have seen her, Monsieur le Duc?’

‘I have seen her, Gaston. And she made me promise that I would see her again. It is very sad. But life is full of sadness. Surely we may say so much. She suffers cruelly, poor child. The tears stood in her eyes: they wetted my face as I kissed her; there were tears, too, in her voice. It is hard that trouble should weigh so heavily upon the young. Age looks for trouble; its back is bent ready for the burthen. It receives it and goes murmuring on its way to the grave, knowing there is no escape, presuming to hope for none. But poor Hélène! It is a sad sacrifice.’

‘I love her so!’ moaned the Vicomte.

‘My poor boy!’ said the Duke sympathetically, ‘I do not

attempt to comfort you. There are times when words of comfort sting almost like insults. But I, too, love Hélène. God knows, my poor little *filieule* is dear to me as though——' he paused for a moment, then continued, 'as though she were my own child. What would I not do to promote her happiness? But what can I do? The sisters are very kind to her. She utters no word of complaint. They are good women, you know, Gaston, those nuns. But what a life! *Mon Dieu!* what a life! To be locked up for ever behind stone walls, or permitted only now and then a stroll in a narrow convent garden! To look upon no human faces but those of the poor sheep-faced sisterhood! To listen to no word that does not savour of the breviary! To tell beads from morning to night; or listen to the little organ in the convent chapel, touched by a feeble-fingered nun; and breathe the while the close incense-scented air of the cloister! What a stifled life! *Mon Dieu!* For poor Hélène above all, for Hélène with her youth and beauty, her courage and spirit. It will break her heart.'

The Vicomte groaned aloud in spite of himself.

'My dear friend Gaston,' the old man continued, 'these things must be. They are part of the trials and the troubles that have befallen France and Frenchmen. Hélène is poor. The De Biracs lost everything in the Revolution; their property has been confiscated by the accursed *canaille*, the ruffians who rule France. And your fortunes, Vicomte, I need not say, are, like my own, at zero. To win your bread, you teach our tongue to little English schoolboys. I earn money, I confess it to you, by means even less dignified. Your marriage with Hélène is not to be thought of, can never be.'

'Despair is my portion,' said the young man bitterly. 'I do not need to be reminded of the fact.'

'You think you are the only one who has loved and suffered; that is what all lovers think. My friend, I who speak to you have loved in my time, have loved and suffered; and yet lived long years, to be what you see me, Gaston, old and broken enough it may be, yet breathing still, with a heart that still beats regularly, if not quite so strongly as once it did. But what do you plan to do, my Gaston?'

'I join the new expedition. De Puisaye has offered me a command. England releases her prisoners of war. They have embraced the royal cause; they will return to France bearing arms against the Republic. The Chouans will join us upon our landing. We hope to take the field with 50,000 men.'

'It is a forlorn hope, my Gaston. The prisoners of war are not to be trusted; they will promise anything to return to

France; but they will not strike a blow for us. They will desert at the first opportunity. Gaston,' the Duke continued very gravely, 'have you considered what failure in this matter means?'

'It means death, Duke. We are *émigrés* out of the law. Be it so. Death will not be so unwelcome to me. I can die.'

'And Hélène?'

There was silence for some moments. The young man's dark face seemed to wince and twitch and blanch with pain. The Duke scratched upon the gravel walk with his cane.

'Suppose we go to Hammersmith!' he said suddenly, almost gaily. 'Can we walk so far? or have we between us money enough to pay for the hire of a hackney coach?'

VI.

THE arrival of the two gentlemen fluttered the convent dove-cote considerably. But the Duke, as the guardian and godfather of Mdlle. De Birac, seemed viewed as a privileged person.

'I have presumed to bring with me one who has long been a firm friend of the De Biracs. The Vicomte de Saint-Géry served in the regiment of the late Marquis de Birac, fought and even bled by his side.'

This was spoken for the edification of an elderly sister, her face grooved over with a network of wrinkles, yet curiously delicate of complexion under the shadow of the wide-spreading white wings of her starched muslin head-dress.

It was a painful, tearful interview, with exquisitely joyous moments, however.

Hélène appeared: very beautiful in her sober dress of a novice, her golden hair gathered back beneath her cap, yet here and there mutinously escaping from bondage and trespassing into streaming curls about her face and neck. There was a feverish flush upon her cheeks. The tears were clinging to her eyelashes.

'My dearest Hélène,' said the Duke, 'I have brought Gaston with me, your old friend and playfellow Gaston, and I beg you to observe that for the next five minutes I am going to look through this grated window into the convent garden.'

'Hélène!'

'Gaston!'

They conveyed as much with looks as with words. They suffered much, and yet how happy they were to be so near to each other!

'We must go,' said the Duke at length. 'Come, Gaston, we have overstayed our time.' Then he whispered in the ear of

Hélène :—‘ Be of good cheer, my little one. I can see a ray of hope, if no one else can. You shall be happy with your Gaston yet. Believe me, trust me, my own *filleule*, and God bless you ! ’

VII.

‘ GASTON,’ said the Duke, on their way back to town, ‘ Hélène must not take the vows. You must not join De Puisaye.’

‘ But my honour ? ’ said the young man, with an amazed air.

‘ But your love ? I will find you a substitute. Fear not. Your good name shall not be imperilled. But you must stay at home and marry Hélène. It is absolutely necessary.’

‘ I don’t clearly understand.’

‘ Yet, happiness is usually intelligible enough. You are to marry Hélène. Isn’t that enough for you ? I will provide Hélène’s *dot*. It shall be sufficient. If there is to be a sacrifice in this case, I will make it. Sacrifices are easy to the old. Ask no more questions ; only, when we have returned to my garret, I will beg of you to take a note for me to a lady who lives in Bloomsbury Square.’

‘ Another Duchesse de Montignac ? ’ mused the Duke. ‘ Does it matter so very much to me, of all people, at my age, in my circumstances ? ’ He glanced round his garret. There was a pile of music upon the writing-paper. ‘ My good friend M. Kelly must find another copyist. I play another part—a bridegroom—and then——’ he took a pinch of snuff. ‘ What does it matter ? ’ he asked. ‘ Hélène will be Gaston’s wife. I shall have made two young hearts very happy. Surely that is something.’

VIII.

IN the course of a very few days the widow of the late Mr. Alderman Crump became entitled to describe herself and to be described as Madame la Duchesse de Montignac.

The marriage was solemnised at an early hour and in as private a manner as possible. Many *émigrés* of distinction contrived to be present, however, and were loud in expressing their admiration of the bride’s beauty, her grandeur of presence, and her superb dress. The Duke, in a suit of lavender silk laced with silver, was thought to be looking his best.

The happy pair left London for the Hermitage, a country residence with handsome grounds and gardens adjoining the river at Roehampton, built by the late Mr. Crump for his own occupation.

The Hermitage was a pleasant place enough, although certain gentlemen of wit and taste in the neighbourhood were wont to ridicule it as merely ‘a cit’s villa.’ The yew- and box-trees were rather fantastically clipped and shaped ; the gravel walks were curiously tortuous ; leaden statues of heathen gods and goddesses met the eye at every possible opportunity ; tiny fish-ponds had been dug here and there ; fountains of trifling power and dimensions were found squirming and trickling in various directions ; while in one particular corner stood a gilded temple of classical form and decoration which was in truth but a summer-house built for the late Alderman’s enjoyment of his evening pipe, as sheltered from the winds, he surveyed the adjacent country. The Duc de Montignac found the Hermitage at Roehampton a pleasant change from his garret in Swallow Street.

It was a still summer evening. The air was very soft and balmy, flower-scented. The Duke walked beside his wife upon the elastic turf of the little terrace fronting the house and looking towards the river.

‘ My dear,’ he said in calm, grave, deliberate tones, ‘ I would not tell you before, because I hesitated to spoil a happy, peaceful day with ill-tidings. But I had letters this morning which urge me—which, indeed, I may say, compel me—to return to France.’

‘ I thought it was not safe to travel to France, Duke,’ she said. She had a woman’s ignorance of political affairs, of the state of the nation and of Europe. Still, she had a sort of general notion that France was rather an unsettled sort of country.

‘ But I go in an English ship, and there will be English troops on board.’

‘ That will, of course, make a great difference,’ she said.

‘ And I go to Brittany, where my estates are—or were. And I shall be among friends. Many very distinguished Frenchmen purpose to go with me upon this little excursion.’ He had designed to say ‘expedition.’ But he decided that ‘excursion’ was a simpler and less alarming word.

‘ You wish to look after your property, Duke ? ’

‘ Yes ; that amongst other things.’

‘ And you will come back safe and sound to me ? ’

‘ Be sure I will if I may. God be with you always, my wife,’ he said with some solemnity of manner as he drew her towards him and kissed her on the forehead.

‘ Duke,’ she said in a troubled way, ‘ I am an ignorant, vulgar woman ; I am not fit to be your wife—I know that. I wish we had met sooner. I feel that in a very little time I should quite adore you, and—really, I love you very much already.’

‘ My dear, perhaps it is quite as well that I am going away. You are the less likely to find me unworthy of your affection. Then gravely, yet tenderly, he kissed her on the lips.

She was an odd woman. She burst into tears.

IX.

THE news of his death reached her—not soon—but soon enough, and deeply afflicted her. There was, indeed, general grief on the part of the English nation because of the failure of the expedition.

Monsieur le Duc de Montignac fell, sword in hand, covered with wounds, at Quiberon. He was endeavouring to lead into action a mutinous regiment of republican prisoners, who, refusing to obey the word of command, turned and fled from the energetic attack of General Hoche, to join subsequently his victorious forces.

The Duke's fate was happier, however, than that of many of the *émigrés*, his fellow-officers in the royalist army, made prisoners by the enemy. They were proclaimed ‘out of the law,’ and were accordingly mercilessly massacred in cold blood by Hoche's troopers, the English fleet meanwhile riding harmlessly in Quiberon roads. The royalist cause seemed wholly lost; the arms of the Republic were everywhere triumphant.

Madame la Duchesse de Montignac long mourned her husband's death, and erected a handsome tablet to his memory in the chancel of the parish church. She contracted no third marriage, but specially devoted herself to promoting the happiness of the Vicomte de Saint-Géry, Hélène his wife, and their children.

DUTTON COOK.



"Make me an angel!"

Love's Augury.

A CROWN for love, a crown for fitful fate ;
 (Ah, love, my lady, drawest not more nigh ?)
 The fatal wreath blooms bright, as though elate
 It blossomed, and the love-wreath seems to die ;
 As though a nipping wind from eastern sky
 Had breathed upon the buds before their prime,
 Each hangs its head ; the waters whirling by
 Are not more wan, and yet 'tis summer-time,
 And high above the grove the noon-tide sun doth climb !

Make we an augury ! The river speeds
 Swift to the rapids of the nearing fall ;
 Cast in thy crown, thy wreath of rue and reeds,
 Sad rosemary, and marigolds that pall
 Might better deck than brows for kiss that call ;
 And I my wreath, my withered wreath, will cast
 In this wild water—I, thy willing thrall :
 Which crown the ripple's eddy safe hath passed,
 And floats unharmed, shall tell if joy or care shall last.

See ! in the morning dew I pulled me roses,
 Jasmine and columbines and honeyflower,
 All the true-hearted blooms, and wove my posies
 With song into a garland that might dower
 The long locks of a god ; I sought thy bower,
 And thee with dirges weaving evil leaves
 I found, and this poor heart began to cower,
 At hint of change and sorrow, spiteful thieves !
 At thought of her who mars the thread her sister weaves.

Yet like a queen didst thou arise and smile,
 Still, sad, and solemn, and I knew thy heart
 True to thyself,—what could it know of guile ?
 And if so be that thou and I must part,
 Yet for my healing hath that smile much art !
 'Tis done—the river whelms the wreath of fate,
 While drooping blossom to new life doth start,
 As o'er the tide my garland floats elate ;
 Ah, lady, and my love, sure joy for me doth wait !

Jack—a Mendicant.

A SMOOTH-HAIRED, whitish-brown terrier it was, with cropped ears, a black patch over one eye, and only half a tail—a thin, shadowy sort of thing that used to grub about in the twilight in the gutters, and in odd corners where poor people throw waste and rubbish, picking up its own living as best it could. If it had not known how to ‘fend for itself,’ it must have fared hardly indeed; for though it had a master who loved it as he would have loved the sun in the heavens, could his blind eyes have been lightened for one moment by its beams, and who treasured it as he did the memory of his dead wife, dead daughter, dead grandchild, yet he had nothing but his love to give it, and love, as we all know, though it never faileth, and is greater than faith and hope, yet in hard times cannot so much as buy an ounce of bread, nor even get a bone for a dog.

Caleb had been blind for more than twenty years. Once he had been a strong skilful workman who had never known a dinnerless table nor fireless hearth. Things had gone well with him in early life: he had married a stout young country-woman, and had had one child by her—a blue-eyed, fair-haired darling, whom they had christened Martha, but whom everyone loved to call Mattie. She looked as if she had been born to a pet-name, and she stuck to it as a right. Mattie was sent to school and taught embroideries and needlework: she was not to work hard, as her father and mother had done before her, but was to lead the quiet gentle sort of life God so evidently intended her for; and if, by-and-by, when father and mother were getting old and could no longer work for their darling, some good honest workman were to come along and offer to marry her—well!—then he should have her, and God’s blessing go with her.

But before Mattie was ten years old, or there was any thought of father and mother getting old, Caleb’s great trouble had come upon him. There was a huge fire at the factory where he worked, and Caleb, in his zeal to save his master’s property, was much burnt about his face, arms, and chest. They took him to the hospital, where they did the best they could for him, and he came out of it in a month’s time with limbs patched, face sound though scarred, but eyesight gone for ever.

How the stout strong wife would have wept over him if she had had time to weep! But time meant money in those days, and

she set to work with a will to get the daily bread. No more embroideries for little Mattie : sewing and stitching will serve her in better stead now, for she can earn a shilling here and a shilling there by plain needlework among her poor neighbours.

And so things went on for ten years or more. Caleb turned woman in the house, and cooked their small meals, and kept things straight and neat as he could without his eyesight ; and the women turned men, as poor women often have to do, and brought in the pounds and the shillings, or, failing the pounds, the shillings and the pennies, and even in those days had always wherewithal to help a brother or a sister less fortunate than themselves.

Then there came another change : fever set in in their neighbourhood, and the brave strong mother was the first to fall a victim to it. Caleb was dazed with grief. Mattie wept her heart out, then set to work again, but this time with less of spirit and courage. From house to house Caleb groped his way, begging for work—he would do what he could for a sixpence a day ; he was, so he said, ‘a giant in strength.’ ‘True,’ said the people ; ‘but a blind giant is of no use to us, and we are too poor to pay sixpence a day for nothing.’

‘I will go into the workhouse,’ said Caleb ; ‘no man shall say I live idle upon my little girl’s earnings.’ Then Mattie clung about his knees and besought him not to leave her, telling him a secret she had meant to tell the dead mother, how that she had married secretly a fine-looking young fellow who had made love to her, how that where he had gone she knew not, nor even whether the name in which he had married her were his own.

Caleb lifted up his voice and cursed the day wherein he had lost his eyesight. ‘If I had but the glimmer of daylight wherewith to guide my steps, I would search the world through to find the false-hearted coward who has brought this shame to our door. Lord, Thou hast dealt hardly with me indeed !’ he said, with his sightless balls lifted heavenwards.

Mattie drooped day by day, but still she managed to keep her customers together, and sent home smart dresses for gay young shop-girls to wear in the summer evenings when they went walking out with their sweethearts. By-and-by a second Mattie came—a little fair-haired, blue-eyed thing, like Mattie the first ; and though Caleb cursed again the false-hearted man who had left his Mattie to struggle through her troubles alone, the little creature came like a gleam of sunshine into his dark life, and no one thought more of her baby comforts, or took more tender care of the tiny fragile thing, than the old blind grandfather.

For Caleb was fast becoming a prematurely old man now. He

lacked the first of youth's greatest preservers—honest, steady, constant work ; and he lacked also the second—good, plain, wholesome food. What wonder if his back were bent, his brow wrinkled, and his hair thin and grey !

How they managed to struggle through another five years he did not know, no one quite knew. The furniture in their little room (they had only one room now) grew less and less ; also their bread was often eaten without butter ; also, when the winter came round, Mattie began to have a cough and complain of a pain at her chest. Then Caleb whispered something in little Mattie's ear, and the child led him down the stairs and along the streets to a bright sunshiny wall in the big city, where people were passing backwards and forwards all day long, and where, if the old blind man held out his hat, there might be a chance of finding a few stray pence in it at the end of the day.

The poor people in the house where they lived felt their hearts touched when they saw the old man and the small white child creeping down the stairs together, and heard the poor suffering daughter coughing as she stooped over her dresses and shirts. They shook their heads at each other : 'It can't go on much longer,' said one to the other ; 'and what they'll do without her, God only knows.' So they would give little Mattie a cup of tea or a bit of cheese to take to her mother, and the mother would drink the tea, and give the cheese to the little one, and smile and shake her head, and say she couldn't eat.

And one day a small rough boy in the house brought to little Mattie a white terrier pup. 'Father was going to drown it,' he said, 'but I told him I thought you would like it, and maybe by-and-by 'twill help to lead the old man along.' Little Mattie took the puppy gratefully, and called him Jack, after her boy friend. They knotted a piece of cord together and put it round Jack's neck, and every day the old man, the child, and the terrier pup were to be seen finding their way along the streets to the bright sunshiny wall.

Once, as they stood thus in the bleak March weather, with a north-east wind sweeping the streets and drifting the dust into clouds that shut out the spring sunbeams, a poor woman came hurriedly up to them. 'You'd best make haste home, Caleb,' she said, 'if you want to see your daughter again alive.' She forgot, poor soul, for the moment that Caleb hadn't seen his daughter for ten years or more, and never could—in this life, at any rate—see her again. But poor people, you know, haven't much time to spend in choosing their words, and they don't expect other people to be very nice in the matter either.

So Mattie and Jack and the grandfather trudged through the streets, and for once in a way got home by daylight, to find Mattie the elder (poor child, she wasn't five-and-twenty then) lying on the bed, the sheet stained with blood, and her feet and hands growing damp and cold.

'She's goin' fast,' said one of the women about the bedside.

'O God,' cried Caleb, kneeling down on the bare boards, 'if only for one moment I might see those blue eyes before they close for ever!' Useless the prayer, the beating of the hands against the closed barred doors: Mattie's life ebbed out that day before the twilight fell, and—well—two days after, there was another mound in the big pauper burial-place outside the city. That was all.

'Yet I live on,' said Caleb, as day after day he took his stand by the sunshiny wall, Mattie by his side and Jack on his haunches a little in front. Mattie's clothes were very thin now, and her shoes almost dropping from her feet. One by one the little odd comforts the dead mother had brought her were taken to the pawnshop, and a few coppers, or at most a sixpence, brought back in return. As winter crept on, she began to grow white and shiver as the mother had done, and then cough and draw her breath in as though to let it out gave her pain. The neighbours began to shake their heads again as they had over the mother. 'She's going the same way,' they said, whispering together, 'and God help the old man then!' Going the same way, was she? Before the first winter snow had settled on the mother's grave, she was gone. And Caleb? Well, he had his dog left him, and his old clothes, and his sunshiny wall, and what would you more? Poor people can't have everything they want, you know, in this life.

When Little Mattie lay stretched white and cold on the mattress on the floor (the bedstead had long since disappeared) on which her mother had died, the poor people came in and did the best they could for her: poor people are not always thrashing horses and kicking dogs to death, as some think; they sometimes do little kindnesses one for the other, and show a refinement which people in higher ranks occasionally forget. So one brought a clean white sheet and wrapt the little girl in it, another combed out her long fair hair, and a third (a flower-girl) put a spray of fern and geranium into her small thin hand.

'She's looking *that* lovely, Caleb, she is,' said a brown old woman of sixty with a handkerchief tied over her head.

'Lord, for this once!' pleaded Caleb, lifting his hands high above his head. 'For one moment only let my eyes be opened, that they may see the face I have loved and never known.' The poor people stood back, as they heard his prayer, with their breath drawn in.

Almost they expected a miracle to be performed—had they not heard of such things in the churches?—and for a moment the film to be lifted from Caleb's eyes, that they might rest on the face he had loved so well before the cold earth shut it in for evermore.

All in vain. No answering Ephphatha was breathed down from the silent everlasting heavens. Caleb's hands fell down helplessly to his side, and Jack crept from out of a corner and licked them, and then the parish people sent their undertakers to carry Mattie away to the same big cemetery where her mother was sleeping.

All gone but Jack! Well, a dog is something, after all, to have left one; and when one is old and blind and poor, one doesn't expect a great deal in life, you know, but is just thankful for a crust of bread to eat, some straw or old clothes to lie down on at night, and a sunshiny wall to lean against in the day-time; so the dog was altogether something extra in the way of mercies. 'How he do live on is a marvel,' one to another would wonder, watching the old man creeping down the stairs day after day to take his stand in the streets; and 'the dog is like a child to him now,' they would say, as they noted Jack sitting on his stump of a tail, waiting for a gap in the crush of carts and carriages before he would venture to lead his master across the busy high-road.

It was in those days that Jack first began to 'fend for himself.' As long as the two Matties lived, there was always a plate of odds and ends of some sort—scrape it together how they might—waiting for him inside the door when he came in from his morning's work; but after they were gone, things were different. It was hard work enough for Caleb to get his own daily bread and collect the eighteen pennies which paid for his miserable little cupboard (attic it was supposed to be) at the top of the house; so when he came in at four o'clock in the winter's twilight with a loaf of bread and a few pence, the cord was unknotted from Jack's neck and the poor animal let free to forage for himself in the alleys and gutters. Jack in this way became very punctual in his habits. At four o'clock he was released from duty; it took him about an hour to find his dinner in the streets; and punctually at five he might be seen sneaking along some by-street with a bone in his mouth or the remnants of some fish, dodging skilfully between the passers-by till he reached home, where at his master's feet he would finish in calm enjoyment his hardly earned meal—to which, be it noted, Caleb never failed to add some portion of his own, however scanty it had been.

This winter of 1881 tried Jack and Caleb sorely. In the summer things had been a little better with them; people had a

little more money to spend, and a few more halfpence would find their way into Caleb's hat, and Jack also would sometimes get a pat on the head and a biscuit or two thrown to him ; but in the winter things began to go very hardly with them. Not that the people of the house were ever unkind to them. Poor souls ! they were kind enough, as far as they had wherewithal to be kind : and one who remembered the old man's wife would come in and clean up his room for him ; and another, who remembered the blue-eyed Matties, would patch up his old clothes for him ; and all would give a kind word or a pat to the faithful Jack, now the old man's sole companion and protector. More than this they couldn't do. You see, when people have hard work to keep their own and their children's bodies and souls together, they can't be expected to go about distributing loaves of bread, or have many remnants of meals to put down in their gutters to feed stray dogs and cats.

When the long frost set in in January, many and many a night did Jack and Caleb go dinnerless and supperless to bed. 'Times are a little rough just now, but we'll see them out together, eh, old friend ?' Caleb would say when Jack came to lick his hand by way of good night and to testify his opinion that, whatever happened, his master was in no sense to blame. Then they would turn in together, Caleb on his straw (the mattress had gone the way of his bedstead now), with his head on an old box for a pillow and the faithful Jack huddled up on his feet.

Would the frost never come to an end ? It was all very well for ladies wrapped in their warm sealskins and velvets to say what a healthy winter it was, and for young people with rosy cheeks, as they looked out their skates, and pulled on their thick gauntlets, to descant on the glories of a 'fine frost ;' Caleb and Jack, taking their stand against the wall—sunshiny, alas ! no longer—would have told a different story. Ah, surely never did east wind sweep down so ruthlessly before, never before did snowstorm last so long, never before were streets so forlorn and empty of passers-by. Caleb and Jack went home one terrible day at least one hour earlier than usual—it was useless waiting there any longer for alms—Caleb with one halfpenny in his hat, and that the gift of a poor frozen-out crossing-sweeper who rightly judged the old man to be worse off than himself.

Part of a loaf was all Caleb's food that day. 'Eh, old doggie, thou shalt have thy bite of it,' he said, feeding Jack with crumbs in the hollow of his hand, 'for it's little enough thou'l find for thyself in the gutters.' Little enough, indeed, anywhere, save snow and ice ; and Jack may hunt high and Jack may hunt low, and thrust his patient old nose into all sorts of odd corners that seem to have a

faint scent of red herring or haddock, but there's little enough of supper he'll get to-night.

What was it made him so late on this particular windy, frosty, snowy afternoon? Had he lost himself in a snow-drift? thought Caleb, setting open wide his door, and listening in vain for the patter and scramble of the four little feet up the carpetless stairs. Six, seven, eight o'clock came and went, and still no sign of Jack; and Caleb crept to bed at last, shivering and forlorn, and with a sense of utter desolation and loneliness at his heart which he had never known before.

Frost, snow, sleet, east wind, went on through the night, and began again with the dawn. ‘Nay, but you're not going out, friend?’ said a kindly old body, meeting Caleb on the stairs as the old man wearily and slowly was feeling his way down; ‘there'll not be a soul in the streets with a penny to spare: you'll not get your bread that way to-day.’

‘It's my Jack I'm going to look for to-day,’ said the old man, ‘not my bread: it may be he lost his way in the snow last night, and he's waiting for me now in the old place by the wall. Give me a hand, neighbour, and help me along a bit, will ye?’ So the woman helped him along to the wall, through the biting wind and snow, but no sign of Jack when they got there.

‘We'll try the baker's shop,’ said Caleb, thinking of their old haunts, and whether it were possible that the baker's wife, who sometimes threw Jack a broken biscuit, had taken him in out of pity for the night.

And while they were in the shop asking after the dog, there came in two children who had a strange story to tell, a story which froze Caleb's blood in his veins as he stood and listened. They had seen a dog, a dog for all the world as like Jack as could be, being led along the day before by two men who came out of a public-house, and who talked and laughed loudly as they went along. Said one, ‘It doesn't do to be too tender-hearted in these hard times; human flesh and blood reckons before dog's flesh and blood any day in the week.’ Said the other, ‘And the doctor will give us a good ‘arf-crown for him safe enough, and ask no questions into the bargain.’

Caleb trembled from head to foot. ‘Take me to his house,’ he said in a voice that startled the children, for it vibrated and twanged like any old harpsichord with all the music gone out of it.

At the doctor's door the two children left him standing on the door-step, they themselves running away and peeping at him round the corner of the street. A man-servant answered Caleb's ring.

‘ My dog ! ’ said the old blind man in the same harsh trembling voice, ‘ what have you done with him ? he’s white-haired like me, and thin like me ; you can count every rib in his body.’

Ugh ! how cold it was ! the east wind and sleet blew in the servant’s face, and how could he be expected to stand there talking with an old blind man on the door-step ? He half shut the door. ‘ Your dog, old man ! ’ he said, ‘ we know nothing about dogs here.’ He would have shut the door in Caleb’s face, but the old man was too quick for him, and had put his stick across the threshold. ‘ My dog ! ’ he repeated, louder and louder ; ‘ white-haired, thin like me ; you could count every rib he had ! ’

A gentleman was coming down-stairs at this moment. He was dressed in the glossiest of black with the whitest of ties. He had a gleaming smile, a thick square jaw, and eyes that changed as you looked at them. ‘ What is it ? ’ he said tranquilly, coming towards the door. ‘ Does the man want money ? —I do not like a disturbance on my door-step. A dog, did you say—white-haired—thin ! Oh yes, I had him with two colleys yesterday afternoon ; the brute ! he wasn’t worth the money I paid for him ; he howled so, we had to cut his windpipe before we could do anything with him. I wouldn’t have had him if I could have got a third colley : they are so much more quiet and patient. Villain ! did you say, old man ? No, I’m a physiologist—you shouldn’t be abusive ; the law protects me, and we must have subjects. There, that’ll do,’ and he waved his hand gracefully ; ‘ go away now. Wants his body ! ’ This to the man-servant :—‘ Oh, by all means, Joseph, give him what’s left of him—it’s in the back yard.’ And the physiologist, member of at least one-half the scientific societies of Europe, and with a high repute throughout the British Isles for his learning and humanity, went calmly into his study to finish writing down the results of his experiments over-night on the two colleys and poor white-haired Jack.

Caleb took the mangled body of his old friend reverently into his arms, he passed his hand tenderly over the strained eyeballs, the blood-stained throat, the severed ribs. ‘ My God,’ he said, standing there in the snow and east wind outside the closed door, ‘ I can thank Thee now that I have no sight wherewith to see the wickedness these Thy creatures have wrought.’

The children came from round the corner and led him home again, Caleb still tenderly carrying Jack with his thin ragged handkerchief spread over the poor torn body.

Hours after, the neighbours wondered why there was not a sound of movement in the old man’s room, and went up, fearing he might be ill, and there was he seated on the floor with Jack’s body

on his knee, and the words of thanksgiving still on his lips, ‘God, I thank Thee that I have no eyes to see this devil’s work !’

Yes, he lives on, this old man, companionless and alone; the neighbours do what they can for him, and he rarely wants a loaf of bread or a cup of tea now. Every evening, as the clock strikes five, he gets up from his rickety chair, opens his door, and stands listening for the patter and scramble of old Jack’s feet up the carpetless stairs. Silly! do you say?—he has gone silly! It may be so; I do not know. Often we are wisest when most we are called foolish, and foolish when we are thought to be most wise. I only know that old Caleb stands daily, blind and silent, at his open door, listening for the footsteps that will never return.

Some day perhaps One may enter in with a message for him—the Angel of Death.

CATHERINE L. PIRKIS.

The Farmer's Wife at St. Fiacre.

I.

ON the right of the high road between Quimperlé and Le Faouët there opens a muddy lane ; it is so muddy that, taking this in conjunction with its steep descent, one wonders how the carts which have channelled it deeply with their wheels ever reached the end of it in safety. When the end is reached, however, there is a Slough of Despond, a pool of black mud, and on the left side of it is a swampy field. Across this field—very wet walking just now, although it is genial August weather—is another muddy road, level with some miserable-looking stone hovels on the left side of it ; on the right is a long low stone house, with only one window towards the road, and a half-door open atop, its arched head making a second window ; this is a farmhouse, and to it belongs the muddy field, and the cow-shed which is really a part of the house itself. The road goes on a little way beyond the farmhouse and then is blocked by a grand old church, a church so wonderful for its exquisitely carved stone spire, and the carved woodwork and coloured glass within it, that pilgrims come from far to see the world-famous shrine. This is the church of St. Fiacre. Coming out of the porch, once guarded by many saints in stone of whom only St. Christopher remains, is a fair young woman ; she wears a black velvet hood over her snowy cap, and this throws a shadow over her sweet blue eyes ; but as she comes out into the full light, one sees that it is not only the shadow of this hood that clouds Marie Kerroh's face ; there is real sadness in her beautiful eyes.

She hurries on from the church across the black pig-trodden straw in front of the farm-house, and nods at a group of threshers, two men and two women, who, flail in hand, keep time lustily as they beat the golden grain out of its husks. The piece of ground on which they stand is paved, and is the only dry corner in front of the house ; and the cocks and hens are very busy here, at a safe distance from the threshers, but looking forward to a good supper on the scattered grain by and by.

The doorway of the house is only just high enough to let Marie pass without bending her pretty head as she goes into the long low room. The door opens into the middle of the room ; a fireplace is at one end and a small door at the other ; this door stands

half open, and through it comes the fragrant breath of cows, for it is early morning still, and Barba the maid is milking them.

The clay floor is very uneven, and a couple of chickens have strayed in, in strange contrast to the handsome carved wardrobes and chests against the walls. On each side of the fireplace are box bedsteads, with richly carved sliding panels, so high up that, in spite of the chests beneath them, it cannot be easy to climb into such nests.

In front of the hearth, on which some logs are smouldering, stands a fine-looking middle-aged man, with a broad kindly face, and shaggy red hair and beard. Though he wears sabots stuffed with straw, he is richly dressed; his waistcoats are loaded with silver buttons, and trimmed with black velvet, his coat too is trimmed with velvet, and his broad buff-leather belt has handsome silver mountings. A pleasant smile lights up his face when Marie comes in.

'Well, little one,' he says kindly, 'have you asked blessed Mary to prosper my journey? You will not be lonely, I shall not be away a week, and you will have her,'—he points to an open bedstead placed beneath a window nearly opposite the entrance door.

The window was open, and through it the full light of morning sunshine fell on the tall figure of an old woman lying outside the bedclothes, and turned her faded green gown to a golden bronze. As the farmer pointed, a feeble smile came on the pale old face. 'You have her, and she has Mousseline,' said the farmer, and at the name a small white kitten lying close beside the old woman patted her cheek gently with its velvet paw as if to say 'all right.'

Marie smiled at her husband.

'Do not hurry back on my account,' she said in a sweet low voice. 'I have plenty to do, and you will give your orders to Jean Jacques before you go—are you ready to start?'

'Yes, I am ready, little one,' he put his hand on her shoulder and kissed her forehead. 'Take care of yourself and the mother,' he said; 'you look pale, my child.'

He went up to the bed where the tall figure lay, bent over the still face and kissed it, stroked the kitten, and then went out of the house. Marie did not follow him, she sat down on a long bench beside the fire. . . .

Presently she put her hands over her face. She knew that the old woman's head lay towards her, but she knew also that her dim eyes could never read her face, could not see the gladness she could not keep out of her eyes.

She was free perhaps for a week; there was no duty to compel her to look a cheerful contented wife.

Marie was not clever, she could not reason, she could only feel;

her heart was full of love, full of warm up-springing affection; and she was married to a husband thirty years older than herself.

He was kind to her, indulgent far beyond the wont of a Breton husband; and yet in her heart Marie hated him because he was not Georges Guengat.

'Georges!' Marie burst into passionate tears, and it was fortunate that the pale old woman lying on the bed was deaf as well as dim-sighted, for the unhappy young woman could not smother her sobs. . . .

A grating sound warns her; the cow-house door opens widely, and Barba comes in with brass pitchers full of milk.

Marie rouses herself and helps her bare-footed maid to pour the milk into huge brass pans which stand inside a long oak chest against the wall at the end of the room, but when this is done she sits down again. She is not neglecting her duty—just now there is nothing for her to do. She is a good manager, and Barba is clean and helpful. Breakfast is over, the beds are made, the cows and poultry have been cared for.

She might go and sit beside her mother-in-law; but no, this is her husband's first long absence, and these first hours she will spend as she chooses. . . .

At one time Marie had loved the paralysed old woman, who, when the young girl's mother died, had taken her to live in the farmhouse. The neighbours and even the people of Le Faouët had said Marie Quenvel was a lucky girl when she was left without a sou, to be hired by rich old widow Kerroh—they thought her more lucky still, and praised widow Kerroh's generosity, when it became known that Jehan Kerroh, the chief farmer of St. Fiacre, wished to marry his mother's maid, and that the widow furthered the match; but no one but the wearer knows where the shoe pinches, and Marie had a bitter knowledge that killed all gratitude towards the farmer's mother.

Madame Kerroh knew the girl's secret. When Georges Guengat was taken for a soldier, he would not let Marie promise herself to him. 'I may be killed or taken prisoner, my beloved,' he had said. 'And then it will be worse for you.'

But for all that they had parted as sadly and as fondly as if they had been betrothed; and Marie still wore in her bosom the little brass cross Georges had given her.

Then had come her mother's death, and Madame Kerroh, hale and hearty then, had shown the poor orphan such warm sympathy that the girl had poured out all her heart; had told her of her love, and had gladly accepted the shelter offered her—till Georges should return and claim her.

Marie had not thought of Jehan Kerroh's love; the farmer was considered a confirmed old bachelor—too staid and serious to think about girls; and Marie had hoped that when his mother and she were alone, the good motherly old woman would let her talk to her of Georges.

Every one had loved Georges Guengat; he was so gay and handsome—such a good wrestler, and the best dancer of the country round; he and Marie had seemed made for one another, and yet this cruel war had parted them. But Marie had been patient though she found Madame Kerroh never cared to talk about Georges, or to listen to her when she spoke of him.

No news came of the young soldier, and Marie became very anxious. One day, a weary year ago, a soldier had come limping through the village, and seeing Marie standing at the door he had asked for a drink of buttermilk. The girl, snatching at the hope that he might know something about her lover, had asked him indoors; and then in Madame Kerroh's presence she had learned the terrible truth—Georges was dead—he had been shot down in his first battle.

Madame Kerroh had been kind at first, but soon she counselled Marie to check her tears; and then the poor heart-broken girl became aware of a change in the farmer's behaviour towards her. Jehan had been kind but indifferent, now he met her at every turn, and he lavished presents on her, and tried to make her talk to him; and his mother rebuked her for her coldness to her son. Marie could not tell how it all came about—she seemed to be entangled in a net—but one day Madame Kerroh told her that she must go out into the world and perhaps starve; unless she married her son, she must find another home.

'Why did I believe her? Why was I a coward?' Marie moaned. 'I would have worked in the fields, or I could have died. What is life worth without Georges?'

Her daily torture lay in her truthful, simple nature. Before her marriage she had told the farmer she loved Georges still—she could never forget him; and he had said it would make no difference, and Madame Kerroh had insisted that, once married, she would find it easy to love her husband. The mother of Georges too had joined in persuading her that in time she would be happy if she married the farmer.

'But I cannot—I cannot,' the poor girl sobbed, hot tears streaming through her brown fingers. 'I have been trying all this weary time, six months and more; and my life is a lie from morning till night.'

Her husband was good and just; Marie was ^{sure} ~~by~~ that if his

mother had chosen, she might have checked his love for her ; she so well knew how fondly Marie had loved Georges, and if she had told this to her son at the outset, Marie said to herself that Jehan would not have thought of her. Yes, the old woman had caused all the misery. Now she lay helpless and rarely spoke ; but her daughter-in-law could not forgive the part she had played. . . .

Marie moved wearily to the window. She would have a baby soon ; yet if it had its father's face she could never love it.

' But for the hope of my child I must die,' she said. ' And I do not know why I live even for my child.'

She went back to her seat beside the fire, shivering as though there was no bright sunshine outside.

II.

HALF of the week of Jehan Kerroh's absence is gone ; he said that he would return as soon as he could, and Marie feels that he may appear any day, when she least expects him ; perhaps he may come when she is crying in the sad miserable way she has fallen into ; crying not only for Georges, but at the outlook on life that stretches before her. Since her marriage she has been so little alone ; till Madame Kerroh became helpless and almost speechless, her incessant talk kept the young wife from any length of reverie.

It seems to Marie, at the end of this third day, that she suffers more in solitude than when her husband is at home. His burly figure passing in and out, with a word now and then to her or to the invalid on the bed, used to break up serious thoughts, and to Marie's sense of duty enforced a cheerful demeanour.

Her freedom the last few days has demoralised her ; this morning she rose late, and Madame Kerroh was kept waiting for her breakfast, and Marie is aware that those dim blue eyes are following her movements with an unquiet expression in them, and that more than once the pale lips have murmured a question she cannot answer.

' What is it, Marie ? ' the old woman asks feebly. ' What ails you, my daughter ? ' And then, when no reply comes, a look of feeble anger crosses the pale still face, and her dim eyes strain after the bent head and drooping figure of the young wife.

After a while this watchful interest tires Marie. Her nature is in revolt to-day ; she is so miserable, that, but for the presence of that other life, she might be capable of wandering forth till she reaches the precipices near St. Barbe—not far away—and flinging

herself down from the steep heights there, on to the rocks below in the river.

She goes and stands under the round-headed entrance door, and idly watches her chickens as they snatch at and fight for the grains left by the threshers.

'It does not make much difference,' she sighs; 'it would have been almost as bad if I had not married. These days of freedom have made life worse because I have had time to see what it is.'

The next minute she feels she has spoken hastily, for there is a sound of footsteps round the angle of the house; it is Jehan returned. He must come back that way; and Marie knows by the shrinking she feels from the sight of her husband, that these days of bitter sadness have been happiness compared with the daily strain which is her lot.

A man turns the angle of the house—a wild sad cry bursts from Marie.

This is not the broad-shouldered jolly-looking farmer. It is a tall dark-haired young man, slender and light in movement, with dark loving eyes. He has sprung forward at the cry, and he holds Marie pressed closely to his heart.

'Let me go, Georges,' she cries. 'Oh, for the love of mercy let me go.'

Georges does not release her, but he loosens his clasp and strokes her soft pale cheeks.

'I have frightened the little dove,' he murmurs in soft cooing tones. 'Did they tell you I was dead, my bird, as they told the good folk at Quimperlé?' Then her sobs strike him as too convulsive for joy. 'Marie, my child, my angel,' he folds her yet more closely in his arms, 'what is your grief—is it too strong for your joy?'

The poor simple young fellow feels that she is struggling away from him, and he sets her free.

Then Marie draws a long shuddering sigh, and looks for the first time at her lover. He looks too at her, he starts, and his colour changes—he staggers back a step.

'Yes,' she cries out bitterly, in answer to his look, 'I am married. I am the wife of Jehan Kerroh.'

Georges' dark eyes, till now so full of sweetest love, blaze with sudden fury.

'Jehan the greybeard!' he scoffs. 'Let him come and take you from me; you were mine before you were his.' He snatches at her arm, but Marie avoids his grasp.

'Come within,' she says, in so calm a voice that Georges' passion is lulled by wonder at this sudden transition.

Marie leads the way through the low arched entrance; she can

close the cow-house door on Barba the maid, but she knows that Madame Kerroh will recognise Georges—well, so she must, the reckless girl thinks; but at least this utter misery shall not be exposed to every village gossip who may chance to pass that way.

The young man coming in from the full glare of sunshine and the darkened room takes no note of the still figure on the bed, he has only eyes for Marie.

‘Oh, Marie, why did you do this?’ there is an agony in his voice that reaches her heart as if some one had stabbed her there; ‘could you not wait?’

She does not answer. She might have been made of stone, but for the utter misery in her eyes, she looks so white and still. He shakes her arm in anger.

‘Speak,’ he says, ‘do not be a coward. Say bravely, “he was rich, you were poor, so I chose him.”’

The sting of his reproach rouses her. She kneels down before her lover; the humility of her action, the tender timid face lifted to his, smites on the young man’s anger; he covers his face, and a sob breaks from him. . . .

There was a pause, only the purring of the kitten nestled close against its mistress broke the stillness.

‘Georges,’ Marie’s voice shook so that she could hardly frame the words, ‘your comrade told me you were dead, killed in battle. Had I thought you were alive, do you think I would have forsaken you?’

All his bitterness came back.

‘And if I had come home and found you dead, Marie, do you think I would have put anyone in your place? No, I would have mourned you always.’

‘God knows how I have mourned you,’ she sobbed out. ‘Oh, Georges, I was wrong, terribly wrong; but it seemed when you were dead as if life was worthless, and it did not matter what became of me; so when they said I must marry him, I did it.’

‘But, Marie, you love me still?’ he said passionately, and he tried to raise her.

The girl rose quickly to her feet; she wrung her hands in despair.

‘Do not touch me,’ she said, ‘and I will tell you the truth. My husband is good and kind.’

‘Curse him!’ Georges muttered.

‘But for all that, I do not love him. I cannot, I have never taken back any of the love I gave you.’

‘Then come with me.’ He held out his arms, but Marie shrank nearer the old woman lying on the bed, as if she felt even her

powerless presence to be a protection. ‘ You have been married,’ he went on, ‘ without your will ; oh, Marie, I feared for you when I was told I had been left for dead, but all the time that I have lain in prison I said to myself, “ She will be true ; ” come here, my love, my own Marie.’

Marie stood battling with herself ; at last she shook her head.

‘ No, Georges,’ her voice had a faint far-off sound, ‘ we could not be happy now ; I belong to you, but I have sworn to Jehan and to God.’

He looked at her, one passion after another showing in his expressive face.

‘ You think you love me,’ he said at last, ‘ and yet, when I ask for the proof, you refuse it to me—peace ! ’ for she was trying to speak. ‘ I tell you, you are false at heart—you never could have loved me.’

He turned suddenly away, he feared to see what his words would do. He stooped under the low arched door, and went out into the sunshine. . . .

‘ Marie,’ said the feeble voice from the bed, ‘ wicked girl ! ’

But Marie scarcely heard : her hands had clasped themselves together while Georges upbraided her ; now she shook violently, swayed forward, and fell heavily on the clay floor, as if she too were smitten with paralysis.

III.

A LITTLE way out of Le Faouët a few scattered cottages show by the roadside—one here, one there, now two together—as if they had rested on their way to join this long straggling town.

In the farthest cottage, a small one completely isolated from the rest, an old woman is bending over the pot suspended from the chimney by a hook. Her white-linen-capped head is veiled by the steam as she raises the lid, but the contents of the pot do not smell appetising ; her black skirt is so short that as she stoops her grey knitted stockings show nearly up to her knees.

Presently she replaces the lid of the pot and draws herself up, showing a tall lean figure. Her face is remarkable, and still has traces of beauty ; under her coarse linen coif show locks of dark hair, and her dark eyes are full of depth and colour.

She has lost her teeth, so that her long straight nose comes down nearly to the lips, for the under lip projects, and when Ursule Guengat is ruffled, has a way of pushing up its fellow which is singular and expressive. In a moment this handsome old face

can take a positively evil aspect, and Ursule might be mistaken for a sorceress.

Now, however, she looks amiable as she stuffs her hand into the broad pocket of her many-striped apron, and sits down in front of the hearth.

'All things work for good,' she says. 'When I heard my boy was dead, I thought it was the saddest day of my life; and yet, if he had come home well and strong, he would have married Marie, and then they would have starved. I was right. I always told him not to think of the girl, a poor delicate thing with only a pretty face; and he would have been content to see me work to keep her.'

She rose up and took a coarse yellow basin from a shelf against the wall; she dipped this into the pot, and then set it on the table.

'Marie is much better off as she is,' she said, 'and the girl bears me no malice. She knows that I was against Georges for loving her, and yet she never lets me come away from the farm empty-handed. I should fare hardly but for her.'

Then she sat down again and tasted her soup to see if it was cool, and crumbled a bit of black bread into the greasy liquid which smelt more like melted tallow than human food.

It was not pleasant to see Ursule Guengat eat her dinner; she did not get one every day, and she was like a famished dog. She put the porringer away again when she had finished her soup.

'Holy Virgin,' she said, 'see how hunger hardens the heart. I had nearly said it was better my Georges had not come back—my Georges, my own beautiful boy.'

A tear stole down her dark wrinkled face, but she brushed it away with her knuckles, as if it were an intrusive luxury, and then she fetched a heap of old rags out of one of the corners by the hearth, and began to unravel them—old woollen stockings, bits of flannel, shreds collected carefully from the roadside or begged from her richer neighbours. Ursule was making food for her distaff; the many-striped apron she wore had been spun and then woven from refuse like this. She had become absorbed over her work when a knock came at the cottage door.

Ursule sat up stiff and still, her lips parted and her eyes strainingly fixed on the door.

It was Georges' knock, she knew it. Had her son's spirit come to call her away?

'Come in,' she said in a trembling voice; she feared to rise to open the door.

Georges entered; his bloodless, haggard face, the despair in hi

eyes, told Ursule her fear was well founded. She crossed herself, and muttered a prayer.

'Georges,' she cried, 'are you come from the shores of the departed? Will not the boatman take you across the sea?'

Georges flung himself down on a stool with a vehemence that ended her terror.

She ran to him, and hugged him, and cried over him, and then laughed and then cried again, till her son's sternness gave way; his head sank on his mother's shoulder, and clasping his arms round her, he sobbed like a child.

Ursule was calm at once; she stroked her son's face fondly, and bade him tell her his grief.

'You are not sorry to see the old mother again, my boy, though she has a poor welcome to give you,' she said. 'Sit here, my jewel, my best beloved, while I kindle the fire again and warm the soup; there is yet some in the pot.'

Georges shook his head, as he sat down on the bench.

'I cannot eat, mother. I have only come to see you, and then I go back to the army.'

Ursule turned round from the fire and gazed intently at her son.

How pale and changed he was! His eyes had lost all the sparkle that filled them when he left his home.

She went up to him, and placed her hand on his shoulder.

'I would not ask a question, my son, till you had eaten, but now I must. It is peace, Georges: why should you go back? there is no fighting now.'

'There is always need for soldiers, my mother, and I cannot stay in this cursed place.'

He writhed and threw his head back against the wall, and closed his eyes.

'Oh Georges, and you come back to your mother only to leave her again!'

All at once his meaning flashed on Ursule. Many a time she had pictured him a returned soldier with only his meagre pay, bent on marrying the penniless girl Marie; but not once had she pictured his feelings if he should come home and find Marie the wife of the farmer of St. Fiacre.

Ursule stood in utter bewilderment; she did not know what to say; her first words might increase this sorrow and send him out of the cottage in mad despair.

Georges rose; he passed his hand through his hair as though he were waking from sleep.

'I will go now, mother,' he said; 'it is best so. I shall only rail like a woman if I stay.'

Ursule grasped his arm. 'My boy, my Georges, you owed a duty to your mother before you ever thought of another woman, and you must pay it. My eyes have hungered for a look of your bonny face, let them feed a while longer, my little son,' she said in a fond endearing tone, her dark eyes full of kept-back tears.

There was silence. Georges let her lead him back to the settle, he bent over her and kissed her as they went. Then, as she pressed his head down on her shoulder, he said, 'Mother, how long has this been?'

Ursule understood. She answered calmly—

'She married him six months ago and more—my son, she could do nothing else—his mother would have turned her adrift; Marie has been very good to me, my boy.'

He drew himself away from his mother. He looked fiercely at her.

'Good to you! Mother, do not tell me you have accepted kindness from the wife of Jehan Kerroh; you who should have resented her falseness to me.'

Ursule could not answer; she could not tell him it was best for him and best for Marie that Jehan Kerroh had come between them. No, she could not say a word to pain her boy.

'Look here, mother,' he went on; 'if some one told you that the kindest thing you could do would be to plunge a knife into my throat, would you do it?'

'You know I would not, Georges,' but she could not understand his meaning.

'Well then, mother, if you have looked on and seen this treachery done, and have borne no ill-will to her for it, you have done me a worse wrong than the knife would do.'

The agony in his voice had made itself felt in his mother's heart; the crust which years and hardships had formed over the woman's feelings cracked, and his sorrow pierced her very soul.

'Oh my boy, my Georges,' there was a piteous wail in her voice, 'has it gone so hard with you? I did not know you loved her so.'

Georges sat up; he looked at her as if he thought her mad.

'You did not know?' he spoke slowly. 'My God! she is my mother, and she would not lie to her son. Mother,' his voice was hoarse with agitation, he got up and stretched out one clenched hand towards her, 'I loved her more than you—more than God; I believed in her more than in myself. All these months in prison I have said, "Cheer up, boy, Marie is true as she is beautiful." Mother,' he wailed, 'she was all I had, she was my faith, and now,' his eyes gleamed with sudden fury, 'I believe in nothing,

not even in you,' he said mockingly; 'for you take part with her. Let me pass, mother—I am going.'

But Ursule flung herself down on her knees before the crucifix.

'Listen, Georges, before you go; hear me, I swear before this holy cross, that in all I have done I have sought your good. Oh my son, my son! if you had said to your mother—"Mother, I cannot live without Marie"—then she should have kept herself for you, even if I had perilled my soul to make her. Now I curse her, and she is accursed; I pray that she and all the children born of her may be cursed in their lives and in their fortunes.'

She spoke quietly; but when she rose and turned to her son, her eyes gleamed as his had just now done.

He put out his hand; he was shocked by her words. 'What have you done? Do not curse her,' he said, 'pray rather that a bullet may soon reach my heart, and end life for me. Farewell, mother.'

He waved his hand, but Ursule sprang forward and threw her arms round him. She felt that he must go, and yet she could not yield him up.

'Oh my Georges—you will come back—or tell me where you are going; I will follow you: tell me,' her hungry eyes sought his in eager hope.

Her son kissed her forehead, and then he gently unfastened the clinging arms from his neck.

'It would be useless,' he said: 'I go in search of death. I forgive you—but I cannot see you; you only serve to remind me of her—poor mother! Farewell.'

The pathetic ring in his voice took away all harshness from his words, and Ursule stood dry-eyed and motionless and let her child depart.

IV.

THE afternoon sun streams over Madame Kerroh, as she lies motionless as ever on the bed beneath the window; but her face has no longer a still aspect, and her feeble voice sounds shrill. Jehan Kerroh stands beside her, listening with a sheepish look on his rough face.

'She is bad and wicked,' the old woman says; 'bad and wicked; it was an evil day I brought her here.'

Her son has stood listening, his face slightly flushed, while his mother repeats over and over again the scene she has witnessed between Marie and the young soldier. Jehan looks sad, but not angry: he is evidently thinking; at last he holds up his hand—

'Peace, mother; wicked is not a fit word for Marie; how could

the poor child help it ; and could Georges know at once that she was married to me ?'

Above all things Jehan Kerroh is just, and he has known Georges Guengat and his own Marie since they were children. He can trust them both.

'Mother,' he looks very sternly into the pale watery eyes that are fixed so angrily on him, 'can you suppose that Marie loves me as she loved Georges ? What is there in me for a beautiful young girl to love, I ask you ?'

' Bah !' the old woman's crooked fingers feebly clench together as if they would like to act the claws they so much resemble ' Bah !' she repeats in broken words, ' see what you have given her, Jehan—a home, and a servant to do the work, plenty of clothes and good food every day ; I should like to see how she would have fared with Ursule Guengat ; rags and a crust of bread would have been her portion.'

' Silence !' he says, for he sees that the door which leads into the cow-house is opening, and he does not want Marie to hear his mother's bitter words.

He has not seen his wife since his return half an hour ago, his mother has kept him beside her while she has poured out her angry story.

' Yes, mother, you must be silent,' he bends over the bed, so that no one else may hear his words. ' I have listened to you, and now I will listen to Marie : and though you are my mother, you must not meddle between us.'

The slight figure on the bed seems to shrink into yet smaller space under her son's rebuking eyes ; she does not answer.

Marie gives a frightened glance at her husband, as she comes up to him timidly. But though his heart aches at the sight of her wan face and sunken eyes, he does not offer to kiss her. He sees that she shrinks from him.

' My child,' he says kindly, ' come and sit beside me on the bench.'

The bench is beside the open hearth, at some distance from the window recess in which Madame Kerroh's bed is placed. It is impossible that she can either see or hear what passes between the farmer and his wife.

Marie has been dreading this moment, but now that it has come fear seems to be leaving her. As she seats herself beside her husband, she wishes that he would kill her at once, and so end her misery.

The old woman, lying on the bed there, has told her over and over again, that women have been beaten to death for a slighter offence than hers.

She tries to speak, to tell her husband how much she has sinned against him, but her tongue is powerless. Her eyes are fixed on the ground, and Jehan sees how swollen are her eyelids; but Marie cannot see the tenderness in her husband's blue eyes.

Before he speaks, he draws one rough hand across his eyes, and gulps down something in his hairy throat. 'How young she is!' he thinks, 'and I—well, I may live for thirty years yet.' 'My child,' he says at last, for he sees that Marie will not break the silence, 'you have had a trouble since I went away.'

Maria rises and stands before him. 'Yes, I want to tell you,' she presses her hands together. 'I am not fit to be your wife—I love Georges still—let me go away from here—I cannot stay with you. Let me go.' She clasps her hands imploringly, and her voice sounds like a wail.

Her husband does not answer her; she looks at him, his calm surprises her.

'Let me go,' she says impatiently, 'I am too bad to stay here; you ought to punish me for my sin.'

'Your sin, my child?' there is such genuine wonder in his voice, such a sad calm in his eyes, that she is silent, ashamed of her own vehemence.

He puts his hand on her arm, and makes her sit down again beside him. 'Marie,' he says, 'you have not sinned. I think, my child, that if you had had warning beforehand, you and Georges would have met differently. You have only met once?' he waits, then, as she bends her head in assent. 'Well, then, it is over, Marie. I shall say no more about it, and soon you will have a little comforter, you know.'

Marie has clasped her hands over her eyes.

'No, no!' she says wildly. 'I will go away, I am not fit to be here. Your mother says I am wicked, and so I am. Jehan, how can you wish to keep me here, when every moment I wish you were another man?' She gets up and walks to and fro in passionate despair.

A deep red mounts to Jehan's forehead. He does not know how to deal with Marie; she seems to him bewitched, so utterly changed from the sweet unselfish girl he left behind him only four days ago. But he will make one more appeal.

'Marie,' he says gravely, 'I have not changed towards you.' Then the strong love he has for his wife—love which is shy as a girl's—bursts forth, and the poor fellow's voice sounds harsh and broken. 'God knows, child, how much I wish this marriage between us had been left undone; it would then have been only I who should have suffered; but, Marie,' he looks at her, for the strange

ness of his voice has made her pause before him, ‘I would give much to see you happy.’ He tries to say this calmly; he has a strange feeling that he, a rough man, double Marie’s age, must seem unreal and absurd to the young ardent creature; he feels too a sort of shame in putting forward his love as holding any claim on her, for she must despise it beside that of Georges.

But the deep feeling of his first words has stirred the young girl’s heart; she looks at him with a new perception in her mournful eyes. Is it true, then, that he also suffers? Has she made this good Jehan, who has always been kind to her, unhappy? how patient he is, how different from his mother, and yet it is against him that she has sinned.

She cannot speak, she feels choked; but bending down, she kisses one of his rough hands.

Jehan understands her, he gently pats her shoulder.

‘If I could set you free, my girl, I would,’ he says, ‘but it is useless to talk; be patient, Marie. I will save you all the pain I can.’ He gives a slight glance towards his mother. ‘Time is a great healer, my child, and you must try to think of your baby.’

Marie listens in wonder. Now that she has roused to think of her husband, she cannot understand this new light in which he has shown himself. She has not dreamed that this undemonstrative Jehan, who seems to live only to labour, to eat and drink and sleep, can really suffer for want of her love; but for all that, it only makes things worse. She pities him, and she looks at him with a kind of grateful reverence, but she has no love to give him—that is Georges’, poor forsaken Georges.’

She sobs bitterly. When she can speak she says meekly, ‘My husband, I will try to be patient, but I do not promise that I can be. I thank you for your great goodness to me.’

Jehan rises and kisses her forehead.

‘We will not talk about it any more, my child.’ He goes to the bedside, and says a few earnest words which Marie cannot hear. For the rest of that day Madame Kerroh left her in peace.

V.

BEHIND the beautiful church of St. Fiacre at some little distance is a fountain, where the girls and women of the straggling village go for water with dark red pitchers poised on their heads. Marie had never fetched water from the fountain since she became Jehan’s wife, but this evening she felt restless. Her mother-in-law seemed to be dozing, the servant was busy taking in the clothes

which had been drying between some posts behind the house. Marie snatched up a huge brass jug and went out towards the fountain. She had been spinning since Jehan left her, but her head had grown heavy ; she seemed unable to think, and she thought the air would cool and refresh her. So she had taken up the jug as an excuse for going out.

Formerly she would have gone to see Ursule Guengat ; now she dared not even venture in the direction of her cottage—it would seem as though she were seeking Georges. Marie believed that he had quitted St. Fiacre, but she could not bear to see his mother just yet. She had never made a confidante of Ursule, because she knew that, but for his mother's opposition, she should have been betrothed, perhaps married, to Georges ; but she had always had a clinging fondness for the stern dark-eyed woman, and the fondness had deepened because she dared not show it. Madame Kerroh had always resented any mention of Ursule Guengat.

Now, as Marie took her way mechanically to the fountain, it occurred to her that this was just the time when Ursule used to meet her when she went there to draw water for Madame Kerroh. The fountain was in a lane on one side of the road, the stone steps leading down to it were moss-grown and worn with the constant trickle of the water ; a girl with two full pails and her petticoats tucked up showing bare legs and feet was coming up the old steps, slopping the water out of the pails on either side.

'Good evening, Marie,' she said ; she was an old acquaintance, and she gave her a friendly smile. 'That old witch Ursule is below, and she has a temper like a bonfire to-day ; it blazes.' She broke into a laugh at her own wit, and hurried on, splashing Marie's ankles as she passed her.

Marie had no fear of Ursule. They had been very good friends since her marriage, and the old woman always told her she had made a wise choice. She quickened her steps. She so longed to hear his mother speak of Georges.

'It is the last time,' she pleaded to herself, for she had vowed not to think of him. 'I only want to know what has happened.'

The block of stone behind the spring was wreathed with blackberry arms, and ivy had climbed over the low stone wall round the little square in which the fountain stood. It made a striking picture with the tall weird woman bending to fill her high red pitcher.

She looked quickly round as Marie set down her brass jug against a stone. Ursule's pitcher fell, and the water which had filled it flowed into a pool at her feet.

Marie was surprised, for Ursule was singularly deft. The girl stooped over the pitcher.

'I will fill it for you, mother,' she said kindly.

Ursule pushed her roughly away.

'I have cursed you,' she said; 'do not touch my pitcher: you curse all you touch now.'

Marie drew back shuddering, she grew white with horror; there was such malice in the woman's cold voice.

'Why should you curse me?' she said; 'I have done you no harm.'

Ursule's passion broke loose; she longed to strike the defenceless creature, but a dim feeling that it would anger Georges restrained her.

'Is it no harm to rob a mother of her child?' There was such a cruel ring in her words that Marie shrank as if she had been struck. 'Yes, madame, I shall never see my boy again, he has gone perhaps to his death; you have made St. Fiacre hateful to him, you in whom he believed as he believed in the Holy Virgin herself.'

Marie stood growing whiter and whiter, while Ursule turned to the fountain and began to fill her pitcher again. At last the girl's pale lips faltered out,

'Did Georges curse me?'

It seemed as if her son's name made Ursule frantic. She set down her pitcher, and stretching out one long bony arm towards Marie, she shook her fist menacingly.

'And you told Georges you loved him, and you can ask that of him who never spoke a harsh word to man or woman either! you are not content to break his heart and blight his life, but you try to injure his good name. But this is folly. What can be expected of a girl who has sold herself that she may have ease and comfort, while she loves another man? You are no better, Marie, than one of the fallen girls in the refuge; not so good, for they did not sell themselves for money at the beginning. No, most of them have loved only too well.'

Marie clasped her hands.

'Have some pity!' she said; 'I know how wicked I am.' The tone went to Ursule's heart, but she hardened herself; she rose up, placed the pitcher on her head, and once more she stretched out her lean fingers towards Marie.

'The curse has been spoken,' she said, 'I cannot undo it if I willed, and I do not will. You have made me a childless mother, you have made Georges a homeless wanderer, and you ask for mercy? you seek to go unpunished? No, you are accursed.'

She spoke solemnly, and turning slowly away she mounted the

steps still with the pitcher on her head. When she reached the top she looked round, shook her hand angrily at the stricken girl, and went swiftly out of sight.

VI.

GRAY morning light falls on the bed beneath the farmhouse window, but it does not fall on the motionless figure of Madame Kerroh. Her son has lifted her on to one of the box-beds fixed in the wall, and Marie, pale as a snowdrop, and to all seeming lifeless, lies in the place of the old woman.

Beside the hearth the doctor, a kindly-faced slender man, is talking to Jehan Kerroh.

'There is no hope, my friend. There has been a severe shock to the system, and then your mother says there was a fall two days ago; it is very sad, but these things happen now and again.' And then, after more talk and some directions, the doctor bustles out, shivering as he feels the fresh morning air, for he has spent the night at the farmhouse beside poor Marie's bed, and now, mounting his high gig, he drives back to Quimperlé.

Jehan stands where the doctor left him; he has not taken in his words—those two, 'no hope,' have dazed his senses. He looks at a little white bundle lying on one of the chests, and sighs over his dead hopes. Only for an instant: next moment he is bending over Marie.

'We have murdered her among us, the sweet girl,' he murmurs; and he stands waiting in the hope that the eyes may once more unclose.

Many times the feeble shrill voice of his mother asks for news, but it gets no answer; once, when it repeats its question querulously, Jehan turns his head.

'Hush, my mother,' he says, 'be patient; soon enough I shall have time for you.'

The gray light is changing, and soon the gold sunshine streaming in fills the long low room and chases away the cold morning gleams.

The farmer stands in his dumb sorrow gazing at his wife.

He so longs to tell Marie how he loves her, that but to keep her in life he would forego even the sight of her dear face; but for worlds he would not so disturb her; he would not cause the slightest agitation to her parting soul.

'And besides,' the poor fellow thinks, 'my love is of no account to Marie—how could it be otherwise?—it only wearies her; best keep it to myself.'

These and the like thoughts fill his mind as he stands gazing

at the pale still face, though not so coherently expressed, for poor Jehan can only feel just now, he can but grope after thought. As the flood of sunshine falls on her face, Marie's eyes open.

They wander round with a strange scared gaze, and then they rest on her husband.

He quivers like a leaf at that pitiful gaze, but his agitation does not make him forget the directions he has received from the doctor ; and soon revived by what Jehan gives her, Marie smiles faintly at him and asks for her baby.

Poor Jehan struggles to speak calmly.

' You shall see it soon, my beloved ; it sleeps.'

Marie tries to stretch out her hand to her husband, but she is too feeble.

' Jehan,' she whispers, with such a wistful look, ' will you miss me ? '

The poor fellow bends forward. How happy such words would once have made him, and how fondly he would then have clasped her to his heart ! Now he kisses her forehead very gently, he fears to extinguish the tiny spark of life which he knows will soon be dead ; he says to himself he is too rough and clumsy for such a frail creature.

' Dear wife,' he whispers, ' you are very ill.'

Marie's eyes are fixed on her husband's face, and she reads there a sorrow which carries its own meaning with it.

Her face puckers a little, and then she smiles at Jehan.

' Bend down close,' she whispers, for each moment she grows weaker. ' Am I dying, Jehan ? ' His downcast eyes answer her. ' Then, you will ask for Monsieur le Curé.—Do not *you* go away.'

For he had risen up, and she thinks he is leaving her. But he only goes to the door to send a messenger to the Curé, and then he comes back to his wife.

' I am leaving you,' she says after a pause, ' and it is better for you, my husband '—then she sees a fresh tide of sorrow spread over his face. ' I would have liked a little time, dear, to show you that I am not ungrateful ; you have been so good, so very good, to me '—she stops and looks up at him with grateful eyes—' so forbearing—and I'—weakness forces her into silence ; she sighs, and her eyes close. . . .

Jehan feels that she cannot see him, and he draws his hand across his eyes, to staunch the tears he has been struggling with ; but instead the action seems to set them free, and they rain down over his rough face in scalding drops. One big tear falls on Marie's hand, and it rouses her from the deadly stupor that begins to lull her senses.

She opens her eyes again, and she sees his woe-worn face bent over her.

‘My poor Jehan !’

Her hand feebly searches for his ; the tender tone thrills through the poor fellow’s heart.

‘I would have been better if I could,’ she whispers. ‘Your love was the best of all ; my little one will comfort you—tell it it must love you dearly for it and for me, my good Jehan—’ She pauses, but her eyes tell him she has yet more to say.

‘Jehan,—the voice is so weak, the utterance so broken, that he can scarcely be sure he rightly hears—‘I have been the sinner all through. I was not forced to marry you. . . . I did you far more wrong than Georges—and he gave me hatred . . . and you goodness and love—not one reproach.’

Yes, he thinks that was the last word—a long shuddering sigh follows—her eyes close, a smile is on her lips, but all is still.

‘Marie ! Marie, good child, too good to me !’

And then, as he sees that she no longer hears him, he bursts into sobs. . . .

The farmer had sunk down beside the bed in his agony, and when the Curé entered he found Jehan still kneeling, his head bent upon the hand of his dead wife.

KATHARINE S. MACQUOID.

The Senior Proctor's Wooing:

A TALE OF TWO CONTINENTS.

I.

I WAS positively blinded. I could hardly read the note, a neatly written little square sheet of paper ; and the words seemed to swim before my eyes. It was in the very thick of summer term, and I, Cyril Payne, M.A., Senior Proctor of the University of Oxford, was calmly asked to undertake the sole charge for a week of a wild American girl, travelling alone, and probably expecting me to run about with her just as foolishly as I had done at Nice. There it lay before me, that awful note, in its overwhelming conciseness, without hope of respite or interference. It was simply crushing.

‘ My dear Mr. Payne,—I am coming to Oxford, as you advised me. I shall arrive to-morrow by the 10·15 A.M. train, and mean to stop at the Randolph. I hope you will kindly show me all the lions.

‘ Yours very sincerely,
‘ IDA VAN RENSSLAER.’

It was dated Tuesday, and this was Wednesday morning. I hadn’t opened my letters before seeing last night’s charges at 9 o’clock ; and it was now just ten. In a moment the full terror of the situation flashed upon me. She had started ; she was already almost here ; there was no possibility of telegraphing to stop her ; before I could do anything, she would have arrived, have taken rooms at the Randolph, and have come round in her queer American manner to call upon me. There was not a moment to be lost. I must rush down to the station and meet her—in full academicals, velvet sleeves and all, for a Proctor must never be seen in the morning in mufti. If there had been half-an-hour more, I could have driven round by the Parks and called for my sister Annie, who was married to the Rev. Theophilus Sheepshanks, Professor of Comparative Osteology, and who might have helped me out of the scrape. But as things stood, I was compelled to burst down the High just as I was, hail a hansom opposite Queen’s, and drive furiously to the station in bare time to meet the 10·15 train. At all hazards, Ida Van Rensselaer must not go to the Randolph, and

must be carried off to Annie's, whether she would or not. On the way down, I had time to arrange my plan of action ; and before I reached the station, I thought I saw my way dimly out of the awful scrape which this mad Yankee girl had so inconsiderately got me into.

I had met Ida Van Rensselaer the winter before at Nice. We stopped together at a pension on the Promenade des Anglais : and as I was away from Oxford—for even a Proctor must unbend sometimes—and as she was a pleasant, lively young person with remarkably fine eyes, travelling by herself, I had taken the trouble to instruct her in European scenery and European art. She had a fancy for being original, so I took her to see Eza, and Roccabruna, and St. Pons, and all the other queer picturesque little places in the Nice district which no American had ever dreamt of going to see before : and when Ida went on to Florence, I happened—quite accidentally, of course—to turn up at the very same pension three days later, where I gave her further lessons in the art of admiring the early mediæval masters and the other treasures of Giotto's city. I was a bit of a collector myself, and in my rooms at Magdalen I flatter myself that I have got the only one genuine Botticelli in a private collection in England. In spite of her untamed American savagery, Ida had a certain taste for these things, and evidently my lessons gave her the first glimpse she had ever had of that real interior Europe whose culture she had not previously suspected. It is pleasant to teach a pretty pupil, and in the impulse of a weak moment—it was in a gondola at Venice—I even told her that she should not leave for America without having seen Oxford. Of course I fancied that she would bring a chaperon. Now she had taken me at my word, but she had come alone. I had brought it all upon myself, undoubtedly ; though how the dickens I was ever to get out of it I could not imagine.

As I reached the station, the 10.15 was just coming in. I cast a wild glance right and left, and saw at least a dozen undergraduates, without cap or gown, loitering on the platform in obvious disregard of university law. But I felt far too guilty to proctorise them, and I was terribly conscious that all their eyes were fixed upon me, as I moved up and down the carriages looking for my American friend. She caught my eye in a moment, peering out of a second-class window—she had told me that she was not well off—and I thought I should have sunk in the ground when she jumped lightly out, seized my hand warmly, and cried out quite audibly, in her pretty faintly American voice, ‘My dear Mr. Payne, I am so glad you've come to meet me. Will you see



The Senior Proctor's Wooing.

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after my baggage—no, luggage you call it in England, don't you?—and get it sent up to the Randolph, please, at once?

Was ever Proctor so tried on this earth? But I made an effort to smile it off. ‘My sister is so sorry she could not come to meet you, Miss Van Rensselaer,’ I said in my loudest voice, for I saw all those twelve sinister undergraduates watching afar off with eager curiosity: ‘but she has sent me down to carry you off in her stead, and she begs you won’t think of going to the Randolph, but will come and make her house your home as long as you stay in Oxford.’ I flattered myself that the twelve odious young men, who were now forming a sort of irregular circle around us, would be completely crushed by that masterly stroke: though what on earth Annie would say at being saddled with this Yankee girl for a week I hardly dared to fancy. For Annie was a Professor’s wife: and the dignity of a Professor’s wife is almost as serious a matter as that of a Senior Proctor himself.

Imagine my horror, then, when Ida answered, with her frank smile and sunny voice, ‘Your sister! I didn’t know you had a sister. And anyhow, I haven’t come to see your sister, but yourself. And I’d better go to the Randolph straight, I’m sure, because I shall feel more at home there. You can come round and see me whenever you like, there; and I mean you to show me all Oxford, now I’ve come here, that’s certain.’

I glanced furtively at the open-eared undergraduates, and felt that the game was really up. I could never face them again. I must resign everything, take orders, and fly to a country rectory. At least, I thought so on the spur of the moment.

But something must clearly be done. I couldn’t stand and argue out the case with Ida before those twelve young fiends, now reinforced by a group of porters; and I determined to act strategically—that is to say, tell a white lie. ‘You can go to the Randolph, of course, if you wish, Miss Van Rensselaer,’ I said; ‘will you come and show me which is your luggage? Here, you sir,’ to one of the porters,—a little angrily, I fear,—‘come and get this lady’s boxes, will you?’

In a minute, I had secured the boxes, and went out for a cab. There was nothing left but a single hansom. Demoralised as I was, I took it, and put Ida inside. ‘Drive to Lechlade Villa, the Parks,’ I whispered to the cabby—that was Annie’s address—and I jumped in beside my torturer. As we drove up by the Corn-market, I could see the porters and scouts of Balliol and John’s all looking eagerly out at the unwonted sight of a Senior Proctor in full academicals, driving through the streets of Oxford in a hansom cab, with a lady by his side. As for Ida, she remained

happily unconscious, though I blamed her none the less for it. In her native wilds I knew that such vagaries were permitted by the rules of society; but she ought surely to have known that in Europe they were not admissible.

'Now, Miss Van Rensselaer,' I said as we turned the corner of Carfax, 'I am taking you to my sister's. Excuse my frankness if I tell you that, according to English, and especially to Oxford etiquette, it would never do for you to go to an hotel. People's sense of decorum would be scandalised if they learnt that a lady had come alone to visit the Senior Proctor, and was stopping at the Randolph. Don't you see yourself how very odd it looks?'

'Well, no,' said Ida promptly; 'I think you are a dreadfully suspicious people: you seem always to credit everybody with the worst motives. In America, we think people mean no harm, and don't look after them so sharply as you do. But I really can't go to your sister's. I don't know her, and I haven't been invited. Does she know I'm coming?'

'Well, I can't say she does,' I answered hesitatingly. 'You see, your letter only reached me half-an-hour ago, and I had no time to see her before I went to meet you.'

'Then I certainly won't go, Mr. Payne, that's certain.'

'But my dear Miss Van Rensselaer—'

'Not the slightest use, I assure you. I *can't* go to a house where they don't even know I'm coming. Driver, will you go to the Randolph Hotel, please?'

I sank back paralysed and unmanned. This girl was one too many for me. 'Miss Van Rensselaer,' I cried, in a last despairing fit, 'do you know that as Senior Proctor of the University I have the power to order you away from Oxford; and that if I told them at the Randolph not to take you in, they wouldn't dare to do it?'

'Well, really, Mr. Payne, I dare say you have some extraordinary mediaeval customs here, but you can hardly mean to send me away again by main force. I shall go to the Randolph.'

And she went. I had to draw up solemnly at the door, to accompany her to the office, and to see her safely provided with a couple of rooms before I could get away hastily to the Ancient House of Convocation, where public business was being delayed by my absence. As I hurried through the Schools Quadrangle, I felt like a convicted malefactor going to face his judges, and self-condemned by his very face.

That afternoon, as soon as I had gulped down a choking lunch, I bolted down to the Parks and saw Annie. At first I thought it was a hopeless task to convince her that Ida Van Rensselaer's conduct was, from an American point of view, nothing extraordinary.

She persisted in declaring that such goings-on were not respectable, and that I was bound, as an officer of the University, to remove the young woman at once from the eight-mile radius over which my jurisdiction extended. I pleaded in vain that ladies in America always travelled alone, and that nobody thought anything of it. Annie pertinently remarked that that would be excellent logic in New York, but that it was quite un-Aristotelian in Oxford. 'When your American friends come to Rome,' she said coldly—as though I were in the habit of importing Yankee girls wholesale—'they must do as Rome does.' But when I at last pointed out that Ida, as an American citizen, could appeal to her minister if I attempted to turn her out, and that we might find ourselves the centre of an international quarrel—possibly even a *casus belli*—she finally yielded with a struggle. 'For the sake of respectability,' she said solemnly, 'I'll go and call on this girl with you: but remember, Cyril, I shall never undertake to help you out of such a disgraceful scrape a second time.' I sneaked out into the garden to wait for her, and felt that the burden of a Proctorship was really more than I could endure.

We called duly upon Ida, that very hour, and Ida certainly behaved herself remarkably well. She was so charmingly frank and pretty, she apologised so simply to Annie for her ignorance of English etiquette, and she was so obviously guileless and innocent-hearted in all her talk, that even Annie herself—who is, I must confess, a typical don's wife—was gradually mollified. To my great surprise, Annie even asked her to dinner *en famille* the same evening, and suggested that I should make an arrangement with the Junior Proctor to take my work, and join the party. I consented, not without serious misgivings; but I felt that if Ida was really going to stop a week, it would be well to put the best face upon it, and to show her up in company with Annie as often as possible. That might just conceivably take the edge off the keen blade of University scandal.

To cut a long story short, Ida did stop her week, and I got through it very creditably after all. Annie behaved like a brick, as soon as the first chill was over; for though she is married to a professor of dry bones (*Comparative Osteology* sounds very well, but means no more than that, when you come to think of it), she is a woman at heart in spite of it all. Ida had the most winning, charming, confiding manner; and she was so pleased with Oxford, with the colleges, the libraries, the gardens, the river, the boats, the mediæval air, the whole place, that she quite gained Annie over to her side. Nay, my sister even discovered incidentally that Ida had a little fortune of her own, amounting to some 300*l.* a year,

which, though it doesn't count for much in America, would be a neat little sum to a man like myself, in England ; and she shrewdly observed, in her sensible business-like manner, that it would quite make up for the possible loss of my Magdalen fellowship. I am not exactly what you call a marrying man—at least, I know I had never got married before ; but as the week wore on, and I continued boating, flirting, and acting showman to Ida, Annie of course always assisting for propriety's sake, I began to feel that the Proctor was being conquered by the man. I fell most seriously and undoubtedly in love. Ida admired my rooms, was charmed with the pretty view from my windows over Magdalen Bridge and the beautiful gardens, and criticised my Botticelli with real sympathy. I was interested in her ; she was so fresh, so real, and so genuinely delighted with the new world which opened before her. It was almost her first glimpse of the true interior Europe, and she was fascinated with it, as all better American minds invariably are when they feel the charm of its contrast with their own hurrying, bustling, mushroom world. The week passed easily and pleasantly enough ; and when it was drawing to an end, I had half made up my mind to propose to Ida Van Rensselaer.

The day before she was to leave, she told us she would not go out in the afternoon ; so I determined to stroll down the river to Iffley by myself in a 'tub dingey'—a small boat with room in it for two, if occasion demands. When I reached the Iffley Lock, imagine my horror at seeing Ida in the middle of the stream, quietly engaged in paddling herself down the river in a canoe. I ran my dingey close beside her, drove her remorselessly against the bank, and handed her out on to the meadow, before she could imagine what I was driving at.

'Now, Miss Van Rensselaer,' I said sternly, 'this will never do. By herculean efforts Annie and I have got over this week without serious scandal ; and at the last moment you endeavour to wreck our plans by canoeing down the open river by yourself before the eyes of the whole University. Everybody will talk about the Senior Proctor's visitor having been seen indecorously paddling about in broad daylight in a boat of her own.'

'I didn't know there was any harm in it,' said Ida penitently ; for she was beginning to understand the real seriousness of University etiquette.

'Well,' I answered, 'it can't be helped now. You must get into my boat at once—I'll send one of Salter's men down to fetch your canoe—and we must row straight back to Oxford immediately.'

She obeyed me mechanically, and I began to pull away for

very life. ‘There’s nothing for it now,’ I said pensively, ‘except to propose to you. I half meant to do it before, and now I’ve quite made up my mind. Will you have me?’

Ida looked at me without surprise, but with a little pleasure in her face. ‘What nonsense!’ she said quietly. ‘I knew you were going to propose to me this afternoon, and so I came out alone to keep out of your way. You haven’t had time to make up your mind properly yet.’

As I looked at her beautiful calm face and lovely eyes I forgot everything. In a moment, I was over head and ears in love again, and conscious of nothing else. ‘Ida,’ I cried, looking at her steadily, ‘Ida!’

‘Now, please stop,’ said Ida, before I could get any further. ‘I know exactly what you’re going to say. You’re going to say, “Ida, I love you.” Don’t desecrate the verb *to love* by draggling it more than it has already been draggled through all the grammars of every European language. I’ve conjugated *to love*, myself, in English, French, German, and Italian; and you’ve conjugated it in Latin and Greek, and for aught I know in Anglo-Saxon and Coptic and Assyrian as well; so now let’s have done with it for ever, and conjugate some other verb more worthy the attention of two rational and original human beings. Can’t you strike out a line for yourself?’

‘You’re quite mistaken,’ I answered curtly, for I wasn’t going to be browbeaten in that way; ‘I meant to say nothing of the sort. What I did mean to say—and I’ll trouble you to listen to it attentively—was just this. You seem to me about as well suited to my abstract requirements as any other young woman I have ever met: and if you’re inclined to take me, we might possibly arrange an engagement.’

‘What a funny man you are!’ she went on innocently. ‘You don’t propose at all *en règle*. I’ve had twelve men propose to me separately in a boat in America, and you make up the baker’s dozen: but all the others leaned forward lackadaisically, dropped the oars when they were beginning to get serious, and looked at me sentimentally; while you go on rowing all the time as if there was nothing unusual in it.’

‘Probably,’ I suggested, ‘your twelve American admirers attached more importance to the ceremony than I do. But you haven’t answered my question yet.’

‘Let me ask you one instead,’ she said, more seriously. ‘Do you think I’m at all the kind of person for a Senior Proctor’s wife? You say I suit your abstract requirements, but one can’t get married in the abstract, you know. Viewed concretely, don’t you

fancy I'm about the most unsuitable helpmate you could possibly light upon ?'

'The profound consciousness of that indubitable fact,' I replied carelessly, 'has made me struggle in a hopeless sort of way against the irresistible impulse to propose to you ever since I saw you first. But I suppose Senior Proctors are much the same as other men. They fly like moths about the candle, and can't overcome the temptation of singeing their wings.'

'If I had any notion of accepting you,' said Ida reflectively, 'I should at least have the consolation of knowing that you didn't make anything by your bargain; for my fifteen hundred dollars would just amount to the three hundred a year which you would have to give up with your fellowship.'

'Quite so,' I answered; 'I see you come of a business-like nation; and I, as former bursar of my college, am a man of business myself. So I have no reason for concealing from you the fact that I have a private income of about four hundred a year, besides University appointments worth five hundred more, which would not go with the fellowship.'

'Do you really think me sordid enough to care for such considerations?'

'If I did, I wouldn't have taken the trouble to tell you them. I merely mentioned the facts for their general interest, and not as bearing on the question in hand.'

'Well, then, Mr. Payne, you shall have my answer.—No.'

'Is it final?'

'Is anything human final, except one's twenty-ninth birthday? I choose it to be final for the present, and "the subject then dropped," as the papers say about debates in Congress. Let us have done now with this troublesome verb altogether, and conjugate our return to Oxford instead. See what bunches of fritillaries again! I never saw anything prettier, except the orange-lilies in New Hampshire. If you like, you may come to America next season. You would enjoy our woodlands.'

'Where shall I find you?'

'At Saratoga.'

'When?'

'Any day from July the first.'

'Good,' I said, after a moment's reflection. 'If I stick to my fancy for flying into the candle, you will see me there. If I change my mind, it won't matter much to either of us.'

So we paddled back to Oxford, talking all the way of indifferent subjects, of England and our English villages, and enjoying the peaceful greenness of the trees and banks. It was half-past six

when we got to Salter's barge, and I walked with Ida as far as the Randolph. Then I returned to college, feeling very much like an undetected sheep-stealer, and had a furtive sort of dinner served up in my own room. Next morning, I confess it was with a sigh of relief that Annie and I saw Ida Van Rensselaer start from the station *en route* for Liverpool. It was quite a fortnight before I could face my own bulldogs unabashed, and I bowed with a wan and guilty smile upon my face whenever any one of those twelve undergraduates capped me in the High till the end of term. I believe they never missed an opportunity of meeting me if they saw a chance open. I was glad indeed when long vacation came to ease me of my office and my troubles.

II.

CONGRESS HALL in Saratoga is really one of the most comfortable hotels at which I ever stopped. Of course it holds a thousand guests, and covers an unknown extent of area: it measures its passages by the mile and its carpets by the acre. All that goes unsaid, for it is a big American hotel; but it is also a very pleasant and luxurious one, even for America. I was not sorry, on the second of July, to find myself comfortably quartered (by elevator) in room no. 547 on the fifth floor, with a gay look-out on Broadway and the Columbia Spring. After ten days of dismal rolling on the mid-Atlantic, and a week of hurry and bustle in New York, I found it extremely delightful to sit down at my ease in summer quarters, on a broad balcony overlooking the leafy promenade, to sip my iced cobbler like a prince, and to watch that strange, new, and wonderfully holiday life which was unfolding itself before my eyes. Such a phantasmagoria of brightly-dressed women in light but costly silks, of lounging young men in tweed suits and panama hats, of sulkies, carriages, trotting horses, string bands, ice-creams, effervescent drinks, cool fruits, green trees, waving bunting, lilac blossoms, roses, and golden sunshine I had never seen till then, and shall never see again, I doubt me, until I can pay a second visit to Saratoga. It was a midsummer saturnalia of strawberries and acacia flowers, gone mad with excessive mint julep.

'After all,' said I to myself, 'even if I don't happen to run up against Ida Van Rensselaer, I shall have taken as pleasant a holiday as I could easily have found in old Europe. Everybody is tired of Switzerland and Italy, so, happy thought, try Saratoga. On the other hand, if Ida keeps her tryst, I shall have one more shot at her in the shape of a proposal; and then if she really means no,¹ I

shall be none the worse off than if I had stayed in England.' In which happy-go-lucky and philosophic frame of mind I sat watching the crowd in the Broadway after dinner, *in utrumque paratus*, ready either to marry Ida if she would have me, or to go home again in the autumn, a joyous bachelor, if she did not turn up according to her promise. A very cold-blooded attitude that to assume towards the tender passion, no doubt; but after all, why should a sensible man of thirty-five think it necessary to go wild for a year or two like a hobbledehoy, and convert himself into a perambulating statue of melancholy, simply because one particular young woman out of the nine hundred million estimated to inhabit this insignificant planet has refused to print his individual name upon her visiting cards? Ida would make as good a Mrs. Cyril Payne as any other girl of my acquaintance—no doubt; indeed, I am inclined to say, a vast deal a better one; but there are more women than five in the world, and if you strike an average I dare say most of them are pretty much alike.

As I sat and looked, I could not help noticing the extraordinary magnificence of all the *toilettes* in the promenade. Nowhere in Europe can you behold such a republican dead level of reckless extravagance. Every woman was dressed like a princess, nothing more and nothing less. I began to wonder how poor little Ida, with her simple and tasteful travelling gowns, would feel when she found herself cast in the midst of these gorgeous silks and these costly satin grenadines. Look, for example, at that pair now strolling along from Spring Avenue: a New York exquisite in the very coolest of American summer suits, and a New York *élégante* (their own word, I assure you) in a splendid but graceful grey silk dress, gold bracelet, diamond ear-rings, and every other item in her costume of the finest and costliest. What would Ida do in a crowd of such women as that? . . . Why . . . gracious heavens! . . . can it be? . . . No, it can't . . . Yes, it must. . . Well, to be sure, it positively is—Ida herself!

My first impulse was to lean over the balcony and call out to her, as I would have called out to a friend whom I chanced to see passing in Magdalen quad. Not an unnatural impulse either, seeing that (in spite of my own prevarications to myself) I had after all really come across the Atlantic on purpose to see her. But on second thoughts it struck me that even Ida might perhaps find such a proceeding a trifle unconventional, especially now that she was habited in such passing splendour. Besides, what did it all mean? The only rational answer I could give myself, when I fairly squared the question, was that Ida must have got suddenly married to a wealthy fellow-countryman, and that the exquisite in

the cool suit was in fact none other than her newly-acquired husband. I had thought my philosophy proof against any such small defeats to my calculation : but when it actually came to the point, I began to perceive that I was after all very unphilosophically in love with Ida Van Rensselaer. The merest undergraduate could not have felt a sillier flutter than that which agitated both auricles and ventricles of my central vascular organ—as a Senior Proctor I must really draw the line at speaking outright of my heart. I seized my hat, rushed down the broad staircase, and walked rapidly along Broadway in the direction the pair had taken. But I could see nothing of them, and I returned to Congress Hall in despair.

That night I thought about many things, and slept very little. It came home to me somewhat vividly that if Ida was really married I should probably feel more grieved and disappointed than a good pessimist philosopher ought ever to feel at the ordinary vexatiousness of the universe. Next morning, however, I rose early, and breakfasted, not without a most unpoetical appetite, on white fish, buckwheat pancakes, and excellent water-melon. After breakfast, refreshed by the meal, I sallied forth, like a true knight-errant, under the shade of a white cotton sun-umbrella instead of a shield, to search for the lady of my choice. Naturally, I turned my steps first towards the Springs ; and at the very second of them all, I luckily came upon Ida and the man in the tweed suit, lounging as before, and drinking the waters lazily.

Ida stepped up as if she had fully expected to meet me, extended her daintily-gloved hand with the gold bracelet, and said as unconcernedly as possible, ‘ You have come two days late, Mr. Payne.’

‘ So it seems,’ I answered. ‘ *C'est monsieur votre mari?* ’ And I waved my hand interrogatively towards the stranger, for I hardly knew how to word the question in English.

‘ *A Dieu ne plaise!* ’ she cried heartily, in an undertone, and I felt my vascular system once more the theatre of a most un-academical though more pleasing palpitation. ‘ Allow me to introduce you. Mr. Payne of Oxford; my cousin, Mr. Jefferson Hitchcock.’

I charitably inferred that Mr. Hitchcock’s early education in modern languages had been unfortunately neglected, or else his companion’s energetic mode of denying her supposed conjugal relation with him could hardly have appeared flattering to his vanity.

‘ My cousin has spoken of you to me, sir,’ said Mr. Hitchcock solemnly. ‘ I understand that you are one of the most distin-

guished luminaries of Oxford College, and I am proud to welcome you as such to our country.'

I bowed and laughed—I never feel capable of making any other reply than a bow and a laugh to the style of oratory peculiar to American gentlemen—and then I turned to Ida. She was looking as pretty, as piquante, and as fresh as ever; but what her dress could mean was a complete puzzle to me. As she stood, diamonds and all, a jeweller's assistant couldn't have valued her at a penny less than six hundred pounds. In England such a display in morning dress would have been out of taste; but in Saratoga it seemed to be the height of the fashion.

We walked along towards the Grand Union Hotel, where Ida and her cousin were staying, and my astonishment grew upon me at every step. However, we had so much to say to one another about everything in general, and Ida was so unaffectedly pleased at my keeping my engagement, made half in joke, that I found no time to unravel the mystery. When we reached the great doorway, Ida took leave of me for the time, but made me promise to call for her again early the next morning. 'Unhappily,' she said, 'I have to go this afternoon to a most tedious party—a set of Boston people; you know the style; the best European culture, bottled and corked as imported, and let out again by driblets with about as much spontaneousness as champagne the second day. But I must fulfil my social duties here; no canoeing on the Isis at Saratoga. However, we must see a great deal of you now that you've come; so I expect you to call, and drive me down to the lake at ten o'clock to-morrow.'

'Is that proceeding within the expansive limits of American proprieties?' I asked dubiously.

'Sir,' said Mr. Hitchcock, answering for her, 'this is a land of freedom, and every lady can go where she chooses, unmolested by those frivolous bonds of conventionality which bind the feet of your European women as closely as the cramped shoes of the Chinese bind the feet of the celestial females.'

Ida smiled at me with a peculiar smile, waved her hand graciously, and ran lightly up the stairs. I was left on the piazza with Mr. Jefferson Hitchcock. His conversation scarcely struck me as in itself enticing, but I was anxious to find out the meaning of Ida's sudden accession to wealth, and so I determined to make the best of his companionship for half-an-hour. As a sure high road to the American bosom and safe recommendation to the American confidence, I ordered a couple of delectable summer beverages (Mr. Hitchcock advised an 'eye-opener,' which proved worthy of the commendation he bestowed upon it); and we sat down on the piazza

In two convenient rocking-chairs, under the shade of the elms, smoking our havanas and sipping our iced drink. After a little preliminary talk, I struck out upon the subject of Ida.

'When I met Miss Van Rensselaer at Nice,' I said, 'she was stopping at a very quiet little *pension*. It is quite a different thing living in a palace like this.'

'We are a republican nation, sir,' answered Mr. Hitchcock, 'and we expect to be all treated on the equal level of a sovereign people. The splendour that you in Europe restrict to princes, we in our country lavish upon the humblest American citizen. Miss Van Rensselaer's wealth, however, entitles her to mix in the highest circles of even your most polished society.'

'Indeed?' I said; 'I had no idea that she was wealthy.'

'No, sir, probably not. Miss Van Rensselaer is a woman of that striking originality only to be met with in our emancipated country. She has shaken off the trammels of female servitude, and prefers to travel in all the simplicity of a humble income. She went to Europe, if I may so speak, *incognita*, and desired to hide her opulence from the prying gaze of your aristocracy. She did not wish your penniless peers to buzz about her fortune. But she is in reality one of our richest heiresses. The man who secures that woman as a property, sir, will find himself in possession of an income worth as much as one hundred thousand dollars.'

Twenty thousand sterling a year! The idea took my breath away, and reduced me once more to a state of helpless incapacity. I couldn't talk much more small-talk to Mr. Hitchcock, so I managed to make some small excuse and returned listlessly to Congress Hall. There, over a luncheon of Saddle-Rock oysters (you see I never allow my feelings to interfere with my appetite), I decided that I must give up all idea of Ida Van Rensselaer.

I have no abstract objection to an income of 20,000*l.* a year; but I could not consent to take it from any woman, or to endure the chance of her supposing that I had been fortune-hunting. It may be and doubtless is a plebeian feeling, which, as Mr. Hitchcock justly hinted, is never shared by the younger sons of our old nobility; but I hate the notion of living off somebody else's money, especially if that somebody were my own wife. So I came to the reluctant conclusion that I must give up the idea for ever; and as it would not be fair to stop any longer at Saratoga under the circumstances, I made up my mind to start for Niagara on the next day but one, after fulfilling my driving engagement with Ida the following morning.

Punctually at ten o'clock the next day I found myself in a handsome carriage waiting at the doors of the Grand Union. Ida

came down to meet me splendidly dressed, and looked like a queen as she sat by my side. ‘We will drive to the lake,’ she said, as she took her seat, ‘and you will take me for a row as you did on the Isis at Oxford.’ So we whirled along comfortably enough over the six miles of splendid avenue leading to the lake; and then we took our places in one of the canopied boats which wait for hire at the little quay.

I rowed out into the middle of the lake, admiring the pretty wooded banks and sandstone cliffs, talking of Saratoga and American society, but keeping to my determination in steering clear of all allusions to my Oxford proposal. Ida was as charming as ever—more provokingly charming, indeed, than even of old, now that I had decided she could not be mine. But I stood by my resolution like a man. Clearly Ida was surprised at my reticence; and when I told her that my time in America being limited, I must start almost at once for Niagara, she was obviously astonished. ‘It is possible to be even *too* original,’ she observed shortly. I turned the boat and rowed back toward the shore.

As I had nearly reached the bank, Ida jumped up from her seat, and asked me suddenly to let her pull for a dozen strokes. I changed places and gave her the oars. To my surprise, she headed the boat around, and pulled once more for the middle of the lake. When we had reached a point at some distance from the shore, she dropped the oars on the thole-pins (they use no rowlocks on American lake or river craft), and looked for a moment full in my face. Then she said abruptly:—

‘If you are really going to leave for Niagara to-morrow, Mr. Payne, hadn’t we better finish this bit of business out of hand?’

‘I was not aware,’ I answered, ‘that we had any business transactions to settle.’

‘Why,’ she said, ‘I mean this matter of proposing.’

I gazed back at her as straight as I dared. ‘Ida,’ I said, with an attempt at firmness, ‘I don’t mean to propose to you again at all. At least, I didn’t mean to when I started this morning. I think I thought I had decided not.’

‘Then why did you come to Saratoga?’ she asked quickly. ‘You oughtn’t to have come if you meant nothing by it.’

‘When I left England I did mean something,’ I answered, ‘but I learned a fact yesterday which has altered my intentions.’ And then I told her about Mr. Hitchcock’s revelations, and the reflections to which they had given rise.

Ida listened patiently to all my faint arguments, for I felt my courage quailing under her pretty sympathetic glance, and then she said decisively, ‘You are quite right and yet quite wrong.’

'Explain yourself, O Sphinx,' I answered, much relieved by her words.

'Why,' she said, 'you are quite right to hesitate, quite wrong to decide. I know you don't want my money; I know you don't like it, even: but I ask you to take me in spite of it. Of course that is dreadfully unwomanly and unconventional, and so forth, but it is what I ought to do . . . Listen to me, Cyril (may I call you Cyril?). I will tell you why I want you to marry me. Before I went to Europe, I was dissatisfied with all these rich American young men. I hated their wealth, and their selfishness, and their cheap cynicism, and their trotting horses, and their narrow views, and their monotonous tall-talk, all cast in a stereotyped American mould, so that whenever I said A, I knew every one of them would answer B.'

'I went to Europe and I met your English young men, with their drawls, and their pigeon-shooting, and their shaggy ulsters, and their conventional wit, and their commonplace chaff, and their utter contempt for women, as though we were all a herd of marketable animals from whom they could pick and choose whichever pleased them best, according to their lordly fancy. I would no more give myself up to one of them than I would marry my cousin, Jefferson Hitchcock. But when I met you first at Nice, I saw you were a different sort of person. You could think and act for yourself, and you could appreciate a real living woman who could think and act too. You taught me what Europe was like. I only knew the outside, you showed me how to get within the husk. You made me admire Eza, and Roccabrunna, and Iffley Church. You roused something within me that I never felt before—a wish to be a different being, a longing for something more worth living for than diamonds and Saratoga. I know I am not good enough for you: I don't know enough or read enough or feel enough; but I don't want to fall back and sink to the level of New York society. So I have a *right* to ask you to marry me if you will. I don't want to be a blue; but I want not to feel myself a social doll. You know yourself—I see you know it—that I oughtn't to throw away my chance of making the best of what nature I may have in me. I am only a beginner. I scarcely half understand your world yet. I can't properly admire your Botticellis and your Pinturicciros, I know; but I want to admire, I should like to, and I will try. I want you to take me, because I know you understand me and would help me forward instead of letting me sink down to the petty interests of this American desert. You liked me at Nice, you did more than like me at Oxford; but I wouldn't take you then, though I longed to say yes, because I

wasn't quite sure whether you really meant it. I knew you liked me for myself, not my money, but I left you to come to Saratoga for two things. I wanted to make sure you were in earnest, not to take you at a moment of weakness. I said, "If he really cares for me, if he thinks I might become worthy of him, he will come and look for me; if not, I must let the dream go." And then, I wanted to know what effect my fortune would have upon you. Now, you know my whole reasons. Why should my money stand in our way? Why should we both make ourselves unhappy on account of it? You would have married me if I was poor: what good reason have you for rejecting me only because I am rich? Whatever my money may do for you (and you have enough of your own), it will be nothing to what you can do for me. Will you tell me to go and make myself an animated peg for hanging jewelry upon, with such a conscious automaton as Jefferson Hitchcock to keep me company through life?

As she finished, flushed, proud, ashamed, but every inch a woman, I caught her hand in mine. The utter meanness and selfishness of my life burst upon me like a thunderbolt. 'Oh, Ida,' I cried, 'how terribly you make me feel my own pettiness and egotism. You are cutting me to the heart like a knife. I cannot marry you; I dare not marry you; I must not marry you. I am not worthy of such a wife as you. How had I ever the audacity to ask you? My life has been too narrow and egoistic and self-indulgent to deserve such confidence as yours. I am not good enough for you. I really dare not accept it.'

'No,' she said, a little more calmly, 'I hope we are just good enough for one another, and that is why we ought to marry. And as for the hundred thousand dollars, perhaps we might manage to be happy in spite of them.'

We had drifted into a little bay, under shelter of a high rocky point. I felt a sudden access of insane boldness, and taking both Ida's hands in mine, I ventured to kiss her open forehead. She took the kiss quietly, but with a certain queenly sense of homage due. 'And now,' she said, shaking off my hands and smiling archly, 'let us row back toward Saratoga, for you know you have to pack up for Niagara.'

'No,' I answered, 'I may as well put off my visit to the Falls till you can accompany me.'

'Very well,' said Ida quietly, 'and then we shall go back to England and live near Oxford. I don't want you to give up the dear old University. I want you to teach me the way you look at things, and show me how to look at them myself. I'm not going to learn any Latin or Greek or stupid nonsense of that sort; and

I'm not going to join the Women's Suffrage Association ; but I like your English culture, and I should love to live in its midst.'

' So you shall, Ida,' I answered ; ' and you shall teach me, too, how to be a little less narrow and self-centred than we Oxford bachelors are apt to become in our foolish isolation.'

So we expect to spend our honeymoon at Niagara.

J. ARBUTHNCT WILSON.

A Gleaner's Carol.

GOLD are the skies above,
 Gold is the earth beneath,
 As gold will glow the grove,
 When autumn's chiller breath
 Shall warn the earth to think itself
 How swift must wane its garnered pelf,
 How swift come nakedness and death !

But summer still is here,
 Our brows with kiss to greet,
 As golden lies the bere
 Beneath our lagging feet,
 Such as we hold not in our hands,
 The willing tithe of grateful lands,
 For God's good gifts oblation meet.

There's gold upon the clouds,
 A glimmer from Heaven's streets ;
 Red gold the brown earth shrouds,
 So earth with Heaven meets ;
 And so they join in all our lives,
 Toiling men, and loving wives,
 And bairn that quickly laughs and greets !

Sing for the sunset glow !
 Sing for the warm sweet earth !
 As evening breezes blow
 Abroad our quiet mirth !
 Earth is mother whate'er befall,
 Heaven bends tenderly over all
 To fend despair and fear of dearth !

Rosa S. Blane



"Sing for the sunset glow!"

An Enigma.

MY FIRST.

It is not generally known that I made a false start in life as an artist. When I was fourteen, my kind friends predicted of me that I should rise superior to all the great painters of my time, and become President of the Royal Academy, and a Baronet, before my beard was grey. Before a beard of any colour appeared I made up my mind that another sort of drawing was better adapted to my talents, and more likely to butter my bread.

My father was a country attorney, and had the best sort of practice in that line. He was clerk to the Board of Guardians, clerk to the magistrates, clerk to the Highway Commissioners, and agent for some of the biggest estates in the country. ‘The boy will be a fool if he throws up a good ready-made business to daub pictures which no one will buy,’ was his uncomplimentary remark, when it was proposed that I should be sent to study Art under Mr. Maulstick. But he was wise enough to let me have my way. I went to London to take what in my conceit I called *finishing lessons* under that then famous Art Tutor, and very soon found that I had yet to begin my studies. I gained the friendship of a man who was a true artist, and his struggles and disappointments showed me what mine, without a tithe of his talent, were likely to be. I went to be a Turner, an Etty, and a Landseer rolled into one, and I remained to qualify as a country attorney, and draw conveyances instead of pictures.

I put up at a boarding-house in the vicinity of Fitzroy Square, much affected by art students; and there made the acquaintance of Mark Steadman, the friend I have just mentioned, and for his sake I remained there long after I had given up painting. I liked, and still like, art and the society of artists. We were made tolerably comfortable, allowed to do pretty much as we pleased, and there was a dash of Bohemianism about it which contrasted pleasantly with the dull routine of an attorney’s office, and suited me.

Towards the end of my second year our circle was embellished by the presence of a lady. Ladies were not admitted, as a rule; but several rooms became vacant, times were bad, and as this applicant was an artist, an exception was made in her favour. She was a widow, accompanied by her father, who had been a Major

in the army, and was, when we first made his acquaintance, a gentleman in the forties with a bad digestion and several grievances. He had a grievance against the commander-in-chief for having him placed on half-pay, a grievance against the India Office about some prize money, a grievance with all his family arising out of his father's will, and a grievance against Providence upon general principles. He was the writing-grievance bore—not the spouting or visiting one. He wrote long and, as he said, unanswerable (they were certainly unanswered) letters to his various oppressors, and kept copies of them which he would read till he knew them by heart; but the idea of putting his shoulder to any sort of wheel never occurred to him. He spent his half-pay on himself, and smiled at his daughter's endeavours to coin her art. His name was Frederick Harrison Berry—that of his daughter, Ocna Wenlock. They occupied apartments of their own, and took no notice of us, until we—piqued, I fancy, by the lady's indifference—sought her, conquered her reserve, and eventually made her the Queen of our little colony, and spoiled her to the top of any pretty woman's bent.

She was a *very* pretty woman—small, fair, bright; with a low voice that thrilled, and pleading eyes. No, I did not fall in love with her—that was for Mark to do—but to my great annoyance I discovered (or thought I had, which came to the same thing) that she was daily showing a more and more marked preference for me. Well, I admit there was somebody else whose influence neutralised the power of those lustrous eyes; and there was Mark. Mark loved the very dust that clung to the hem of her skirt, and it was hard lines for him—poor fellow!—to be slighted and snubbed and to see what seemed to be a dead set made at me.

Don't misunderstand this. There was nothing indelicate in her conduct, or even unwomanly; little that even one of her own sex could have detected and taken exception at. You must not think me ungallant either, when I say that I can liken her behaviour towards me to nothing more exact than the conduct of an affectionate dog towards a kind master; for I think that many of us have a good deal to learn in the matter of truth and loyalty from dogs. I have seen a spaniel watch his master with eyes which seemed to say, ‘What can I do to please you? ah! *do* let me know!’ I have seen the same gentle eyes flash with fury at a fancied affront to him. There was much of this curious mixture of abject worship and daring about Ocna Wenlock; and as I am now on the shady side of fifty, and know what I am about to relate, I can afford to say so, I hope, without being mistaken for a coxcomb or a cad. After this you will be surprised to hear that she

was no more in love with me than I was with her ; but this I had to find out later on.

They say that Love is blind. Never was there a greater mistake. There are a few things at which he winks, but for thousands of others he is argus-eyed, and every orb is microscopic. Mark's love-lit eyes saw, and magnified what they saw, and his heart was grieved. Of all humours, a man's jealousy is the most difficult to deal with ; especially if he be your friend. If I were merry with Mark Steadman, he thought I was elated with my *bonne fortune*, and became savage. If I were glum, he put it down to a troubled conscience. If I had told him candidly—‘ This woman you think so much of is making love to *me*, and I don't like it,’ there would have been a row, of course. I was not at liberty just then to make known to any one my engagement to the lady who afterwards became my wife. To make matters worse, all the other fellows took it for granted that I was Mrs. Wenlock's accepted lover, and occupied themselves by making disparaging remarks about me in her presence for the fun of seeing her flash out in my defence. Why didn't I get leave to tell her in confidence that I was an engaged man ? Vastly fine ! Perfect candour between engaged people is a lovely thing, I know ; but you write to your *fiancées* that another girl is making love to you, and see what you'll get.

At last I became desperate, and resolved to do two things which sound ugly, but which were really the kindest and the best to be done under the circumstances. I resolved to run away and to break my word.

I had cause at the time to remember what passed in Ocna Wenlock's room the day when that resolution was carried into effect.

Subsequent events brought out every detail with intense vividness. Nearly thirty years have passed, but I can shut my eyes and see her standing before the fire—one little foot, delicately slippers, on the fender rail ; and one pretty white hand spread to shield her face from the blaze—as she listened to what I was prepared to find treated as cruel and cutting words.

I began by telling her, abruptly, that I had come to wish her good-bye, as I was going away ‘ to-morrow.’ I expected that she would start, and demand ‘ Why ? ’ but she only asked almost under her breath—‘ Where ? ’ This was a relief, as it brought me straight to my benignant breach of faith.

‘ I am going on a visit to the family of the lady to whom I am engaged,’ I said, and braced myself up for an explosion.

‘ Why did you not tell me long ago,’ she replied quite calmly, ‘ that you were engaged ? ’

'Because I was not at liberty to do so—I ought not to tell you now.'

'Then, why do you?' she asked, looking me full in the face with a smile that would have melted an (unengaged) anchorite.

I expected either tears or anger at this point, and one or the other would have struck the key for the semi-brotherly 'arrangement' I had prepared.

'Why do I?' I stammered; 'why, because—because—I really don't know why I do so. Perhaps I thought you'd take some interest in it.' I felt small, and I spoke spitefully

'I do take great interest in you,' she replied. 'Do you not feel that I do?'

'You are always very kind.'

'Kind! Kind is not the word,' she retorted, with the first sign of annoyance. 'Would you like the girl you were going to marry, to say of you that you were always very kind to her?' 'There is nothing in the world that I would not do for you,' she added in her usual low sweet voice; thus luckily (for me) letting her excessively inconvenient question pass unanswered; and giving me just the one I wanted.

'You could do me a great' *kindness*, I was going to say, but checked myself just in time and substituted 'favour, if you would not be so hard upon Mark Steadman. Don't you know that he loves you?'

'Yes,' she said dreamily, 'he loves me.'

'And he is such a good, dear, true fellow,' I went on, warming up. 'If you were my own sister, I would not wish a better husband for you.'

'Ay, but you ought to wish a better wife for him,' she replied. 'I am pretty, but I am not good or true.' She spoke as calmly as though it had been, I am not cold or hungry. 'My name,' she continued, 'is not Wenlock, and I am not a widow. It is so hard for a girl to go about and do anything. As an unmarried woman I could not have got in here, don't you see? Papa is so helpless; I must make a living for both.' Here she seated herself and substituted a fan for the hand which had served as a fire-screen. 'We have some troublesome law business,' she continued, 'which drags along disgracefully slowly. When this is settled, we shall be comfortably off; but in the mean time we must have bread, and I must earn it. No one will listen to a girl who talks about earning money, or will believe that she is in earnest. Are you very shocked? I never intended to tell this to any one, but I must tell you. Oh, please don't look so grave. If I have done wrong, I had no-one to advise me rightly. You know what papa is. I am all alone—all alone.'

'Then why,' I demanded, 'do you snub a fine honest fellow like Mark, who asks for no greater happiness than to work for you and be your lawful protector?'

'He is your friend, and I am not good,' she answered as deliberately as before. 'I cannot see harm in things which you and Mark and every one know are bad. If a man has money which he does not want, and would not be hurt by losing; and I do want it, and would be saved from hurt by having it—I cannot see that it would be wrong to take it. I can only feel that it would be horrid to be sent to prison for taking it, and that is the only reason why I should refrain from stealing if I had the chance.'

There was a half-innocent, half-comical expression on her face which disarmed serious criticism. 'My dear Mrs. Wenlock,' I replied, 'did you ever know any one who had anything valuable that they did not want? The very richest want something more than they have, and I suppose there is no one so poor but he has what somebody envies him.'

'I once read,' she continued, as though following her own thoughts, 'of a country in which, when people were old and their lives were useless, they were treated as if they were dead.'

'Gulliver's Voyage to Laputa,' I cut in. 'Would you like to have your dresses made by trigonometrical observations?'

'If there were a man who did not enjoy his own life, and made other people's hateful,' she continued, still in the same tone, 'absolutely hateful—and they killed him—you would call that murder—I don't.'

'Oh, Mrs. Wenlock!'

'That is it! you're horrified. Mr. Steadman would be horrified if he knew. Don't you see that I am not good?'

'I see that you are trying to make yourself out very foolish,' I replied with vexation; 'you know you don't mean one word of this—this wicked nonsense.'

'I do,' she answered, turning her pretty little foot round coquettishly on the heel.

'Look me in the face, Mrs. Wenlock,'—I spoke sternly now,—'and say that again.'

She started from her seat with a cry of sudden pain; sprang to the other end of the room, and thrust out her arms as though to repel me.

'No—no—no!' she almost screamed, 'not that. Leave me alone. You must not press me so hard. Oh, have some pity! Can you not understand? Will you not see?' Then she began to sob hysterically.

If you had offered me a hundred pounds a minute for life, I could not understand; and try my best, I could not see what I had done to provoke this outburst.

It had one good effect, however; it changed the subject.

'Tell me,' she said, when she had somewhat recovered, 'about this lady you are going to marry. Is she pretty?'

I showed her Nora's miniature, which I wore in a locket, and bade her judge for herself.

'A sweet face—a *good* face,' she mused.

'Are you very much in love; both of you?'

'I hope so,' I said; 'I can answer for myself.'

'You wouldn't marry a girl that didn't love you?'

'Certainly not.'

'Then, why do you want me to marry Mark Steadman?'

'Because I am sure you would love him if you would only give him a chance to show you what a dear, true-hearted fellow he is.'

'You said just now that I was hard upon him—how so?'

'Well, you are so cold—careless, and I must add, Mrs. Wenlock, that you are sometimes even rude.'

'I will try and behave better when you are gone. I have no thoughts for any one else when you are here,' she said, looking me full in the face. The woman was a Sphinx!

'Let me be perfectly candid with you, Mrs. Wen—'

'Call me Ocna now,' she interrupted; 'that is real.'

'Mark and I were bosom friends until you—Well, I don't like to say.'

'Go on.'

'Never mind the why and wherefore. Day by day our friendship is cooling. We shall have a downright quarrel some day, soon.'

'About me?'

'About you.'

'Ridiculous! I wish I were in love with you—that would not be so bad.'

How an unmarried woman could catch my meaning and refute it without a blush was only one of the conundrums which Ocna's behaviour to me that day presented. She ended by promising to be good to Mark for my sake, and somehow it never occurred to me that I was not doing him a service in thus aiding his suit to a girl who passed herself off as a widow, who admitted she would steal but for fear of a gaol, and did not consider the killing of troublesome old people to be murder. Of course, I did not broach the subject to him, and must admit that my own head was anything but clear upon it. What could she mean by wishing she

were in love with me, and adding, ‘that would not be so bad’?—so bad as what?

MY SECOND.

I PACKED up my traps and started for the country in that frame of mind which belongs to a man who has escaped a scene and out-flanked an explanation—a happy frame of mind, but one which I am afraid will not bear analysis. When I reflect that my satisfaction progressed with my packing up, and increased as the rate of my movements became accelerated—marching, so to speak, at slow time as I slunk down stairs, at quick step in the hansom which took me to the station, and breaking into the ‘double’ as the train gave its last preliminary snort and started—I must admit that there was nothing heroic about it. I was like one who had gone to the dentist to have a tooth out, and got off with a slight lancing of the gum; but for a time I was full of self-admiration for the excellent manner in which I had managed a delicate affair, and of rejoicing over the result. In less than two hours I reached my destination. Nora was on the platform to meet me, and drove me home in her pony carriage. From that moment I had no time to think of other folks’ love affairs.

On the fourth day I received a telegram from Mark, which ran thus: ‘Wish me joy; Ocna consents. I know all. God bless you. Will write.’

This had, of course, to be explained. Telegrams were rare in those days. An engaged man cannot receive one in a country house and keep its contents to himself; and an engaged girl is full of pretty curiosity about another woman who has just assumed the golden chain. Nora had heard a good deal about Mark. I had now to make her more than equally well acquainted with Ocna, and to explain why I had never mentioned her in any of my letters. Engaged girls do not like to hear all of a sudden that a very pretty woman has been living under the same roof with their adorer, and seeing him every day for months and months, without their knowledge. Some of the truth, however, was enough to put this straight. I told her I was not in the habit of thinking, and therefore did not write, about other women; and had I not made this match? ‘I know all. God bless you!’ meant, ‘I know that you have pleaded my cause—God bless you for doing so.’ There was no necessity to tell her of the mistake I had made with regard to Ocna’s feelings towards me, or to betray her secrets.

Thinking it over by myself, I adhered to this reading of the message. If it had ended with ‘I know all,’ I should have concluded that Ocna had confessed all that she had told me; but

the concluding words seemed to limit his meaning, and make it refer only to what I had done. I should have felt much more comfortable if I could have thought otherwise. Well, I should get his letter in the morning, and that would explain.

There was a family dinner party that day, given to celebrate Nora's engagement, and present me to her cousins and her uncles and her aunts. Younger branches and some girl friends came in the evening, and there was a dance. It was nearly two o'clock before I went to bed, and I am quite sure that I had not thought of Mark or Ocna, or anything relating to them, for at least eight hours. My mind was full of Nora, and of my future happiness with her. My slumber should have been soft, and my dreams pleasant. I had not taken anything for supper which was likely to lay the keel of a nightmare in digestive organs twenty-two years old, and yet something unpleasantly like one came upon me with my first sleep.

I was in a room as different from that in which I had gone to bed as it was possible for two rooms to be. The floor was of red brick, the ceiling low and crossed by five huge oak beams. On my right hand, as I stood facing the door—through which, by the by, I did not seem to have entered—was a large oriel window, glazed with small triangular pieces of greenish glass set in lead. Opposite to this was the fireplace—a cavernous recess, flanked with seats, and containing a broken lawn-mower and a pair of rusty iron ‘dogs.’ Three steps led up to the door (showing that the room must be lower than the rest of the house), and built into the wall on each side of it were four wide oaken presses, two to the right and two to the left, which filled up the rest of that side. The fourth side was a plain whitewashed space. The furniture consisted of one chair, a small mahogany three-legged table, and a very old-fashioned turn-up bedstead. Waking : I know that I had never been in such a room, nor can I remember ever having seen anything like it in a picture, or having read a description of any place resembling it. Dreaming : I felt no surprise at being there, although the bed was occupied. Gradually I began to understand that the occupant of the bed was the lady I had known as Ocna Wenlock, and yet it did not strike me that I was intruding. On the contrary, it seemed as though I had a right to be where I was, because the room was hers.

Understand me. I did not see her. There was no necessity for me to look in her direction, to know that she was present. I took no more interest in her than in the broken mowing-machine, or the three-legged table, or anything else which had been taken in by my first glance round the room. *I felt that she was there,*

that she knew I was there, and that we should not come into personal contact, however long the dream might last. I also felt that there was something in the room which was to have a powerful effect upon me; and as I looked around under this impression, my eyes became fixed and my mind fascinated by the closed doors of the second press on the left-hand side of the doorway.

Now, there were eight sets of doors; one pair as much like the rest as similarity of material, colour, and workmanship, toned down by use and age, could make them. There was no reason why I should stand in front of that particular press, and be, as I have said, fascinated by it. I had no fear that the closed doors hid anything horrible, so that when they slowly parted, and swung back to their full extent, I was not startled. The movement appeared to answer my wish to know what was inside.

There was nothing extraordinary inside: only some gardening tools, a set of bowls, and three or four old-time cricket bats on the lower and wider shelves. Higher up I saw a net and fishing tackle, a game bag, and a machine for filling cartridges. Higher up still, on the easiest level to get at, were a lot of farriers' instruments for shoeing, bleeding, and dosing horses, several books on Veterinary Surgery, and a few gallipots and bottles—nothing more. The upper shelves were empty. There was absolutely nothing to inspire fear or horror; but yet, whilst the thought—‘Well, if there be a surprise in store for me, it isn't there,’ was forming in my mind, an indescribable sensation of horror and of fear began to creep over me. I felt that I must shut those doors, or I would be overpowered by an influence full of agony, terror, and death, which seemed to be pouring forth from between them, and growing stronger and stronger. But I could not move. Nightmares are common enough, I suppose, and every one who has had one knows what I suffered in the vain attempt to get at those doors and close them. When I awoke, I found myself sitting up in bed bathed in perspiration, with a throat as dry as a lime-kiln, and feeling as though I had run a mile at the top of my speed.

The morning's post brought me letters from Mark and Oena. The former I read to Nora, the latter I kept to myself, for it was as follows :

Dear Friend,—Mark knows that I am not a widow, and isn't angry. I think he's glad. He was terribly jealous of you, but that is now at an end. I think I shall love him. I want you to wish with all your heart that I shall. Pray do not repeat to any one what passed during our last conversation. I shall lose those ideas when I have a good man for my husband. Mark wants to be married as soon as possible, and I have no objection. Do not think me unkind if I say that I would rather not see you again until we are married, and beg that you will make some excuse not to be present at our wedding.

Yours, OENA.

In Mark's letter he told me that he wanted to be married at once, but Ocna insisted on three weeks' delay. He concluded by begging me to let no engagement stand in the way of my being his best man.

What was I to think? What was I to do? Did this sphinx of a woman love me, after all, and fear that my presence would influence her against Mark? If so, how could she ask me to wish with all my heart that she should love him?

I remained a week with Nora's family, and then went home to prepare for her promised visit to mine. Our railway was not in existence in those days. I had to go to Bristol by the Great Western, take the steamboat to Swansea, and thence had a six-miles' drive to reach my destination. The servant in charge of the dog-cart had been for years in our service, and of course I got into conversation with him. How were they all at home? and so on; and what was the news? Well, there was no news in particular, as of course I had heard of the murder. I had not heard of any murder in our parts and, wanted to be told all about it. My informant was one of those tiresome people who plunge into the middle of a story with the assumption that you know all the antecedents. I think he commenced thus: 'Well, you see, she poisoned him with corrosive sublimate in his beer;' and was vexed when I asked who 'he' was, and who 'she' was, and when and where? However, I got at all he knew by degrees; and this was the result. An old and exceedingly disreputable person, named Tanner, lived in a tumble-down house attached to an extinct copper mine on the outskirts of Swansea, and about seven miles from where we lived, and had lately been waited upon by a niece to whom he had given a home out of charity (the only kind thing, I suppose, he ever did) upon the death of her father. She was young, pretty, vain, and not particularly steady; as it appeared that she had run away from home with a circus company when she was fifteen. Her home had been at Leamington, where her father kept a livery stable, and let her do pretty much what she pleased. If a gay place like Leamington did not content her, it was only natural that she should not enjoy life in a lonely Welsh hotel, in company with a man who got drunk regularly every night, and threw whatever he could reach at her head every morning of his life. She did not run away this time, but got some corrosive sublimate; put a teaspoonful of it in old Tanner's beer, and sobered him for ever. Then she packed up her things, took two hundred and seventy sovereigns which he kept hid in an old stocking, and ran away. The case, as put by my informant, was a very clear one, and, he added, 'she'll be hung, sure.'

I have said that my father held, among other offices, that of clerk to the county justices. In this capacity he had to prepare the indictments upon which prisoners were tried at the assizes, and instruct counsel for the prosecution. As soon as home-talk was exhausted, I naturally asked about the murder. ‘Come to the office to-morrow,’ said my father, ‘and I’ll show you the depositions.’

‘When I am for the prosecution,’ he began, ‘I think over the case as though I were for the defence ; and *vice versa*. That’s the way to find out the weak places and stop up the holes. Now, then. Two heads are better than one. Listen, and see what reasons you could give a jury to find Elizabeth Tanner not guilty of murdering her uncle.

‘Robert Tanner died from the effects of corrosive sublimate, mixed in his beer, on the 19th of last December. Enough of the poison was found in his stomach to kill five men, and as much more remained in the bottom of the beer pot. His niece and servant, Elizabeth, was the only person in the house with him, and as soon as the doctor said the word ‘poison’ she ran away, taking all she could find of the old man’s money with her. This seems to twist a powerful strand of the rope—don’t it? Well, there are facts which untwist it a little. The old man not only had a lock tap to his beer barrel, but locked up the cellar in which it was kept. There is nothing to show that Elizabeth had any key. When the poison began to work, she ran all the way into Swansea for a doctor; and when he asked what Tanner had been eating or drinking last, she gave him the pot with half a pint of liquor still in it, and, as I have said, enough poison in *that* to kill five men. If she is a murdereress, she is a great fool, but there is nothing out-of-the-way in that. Murderers always do stupid things. She ought to have thrown away that beer, and washed out the pot.

‘According to the medical evidence, he must have taken the poison about six o’clock in the evening, the time when he usually began to get fuddled. Was Elizabeth in the house then? No. She was at the cottage of a Mrs. Thomas, more than half a mile away, from four o’clock till seven; when she returned and found the deceased rolling on the floor in agony. Now for a twist the other way.

‘The only articulate words which the dying man uttered were, “Damn her! damn her! This is her work; damn her!” The pot from which he drank was not locked up. The passage-way in which it was kept was dark, the beer cellar was dark. Poison might easily have been thrown into the empty pot, and remained

there unnoticed when he drew his beer into it. She might have left the house for the purpose of being out of the way, if by chance her scheme should fail.

‘Where did the poison come from? Ah! that bothered us all for a long time. Inquiries were made of every chemist and druggist for miles round, and also at Leamington; but in vain. No one had sold a woman such a quantity of crude corrosive sublimate. At last, by sheer accident, in clearing out a dry ditch near the cottage of that very Mrs. Thomas, an empty bottle was found, bearing a label on which was printed, “Poison. *Hydrgyl Bichlorid*. Hayes, Chemist and Druggist, Hereford.” Hayes identified it, and proved that it originally contained two ounces of corrosive sublimate, which he had sold to a farmer named Killick, who lives near Llandilo, and is a sort of hedge veterinary surgeon. Killick admits having bought it, and taken it home to make a wash for killing ticks in sheep (for which purpose he used about a third of the stuff), but he could not for the life of him account for the bottle being found empty in a ditch twenty-seven miles away from his house; until—now comes the most extraordinary part of the case. On the evening of the 3rd of August last year, Warren’s stage coach was upset and the driver killed, close to Killick’s house, which is on the high road from Hereford. Miss Elizabeth Tanner was one of the passengers on her way to her uncle—now do you see?—and with the rest of them, nine altogether, she was entertained that night by Killick.’

‘So that she had the opportunity of taking the bottle!’ I suggested.

‘So that she did actually take the bottle,’ my father resumed, ‘if we are to believe the evidence which I will now read. Never mind the preliminaries. The witness is the only female passenger, and she deposes as follows:

“I have spent the most part of my life in India with my father, who is an officer in the army. We have no regular home in England, but have occupied lodgings in various places. We were at Cheltenham for some time. I remember the 3rd of August; we were making a tour in South Wales. The coach in which we were travelling upset, and we spent the night at Mr. Killick’s house. The prisoner was one of the passengers. I did not know her. I had never seen her before. It was at first arranged that we were to sleep together; but I have always had a room to myself, and begged for any sort of accommodation so that I could be alone. I think the prisoner was offended at my not wishing to share her bed. She said some unkind things of me. I was accommodated in a sort of pantry. I was too much excited by the accident to

sleep ; besides, the bed was very uncomfortable. I do not know how long I lay awake. It must have been past midnight, when I was surprised by something. Some one came into the room with a lighted candle in her hand. It was the prisoner. She was dressed. I asked her what she wanted. She made no reply. I was frightened. I thought she had come to quarrel with me, and hid my face under the bedclothes for a while. After a little, not hearing anything, I looked up and saw that she had opened a cupboard, and was looking at some bottles on one of the shelves. She took down several, looked at them, and put them back again. At last she took down one, looked at it, and put it into her pocket. It was similar in size and shape to the one now produced." [‘The bottle found in the ditch,’ interpolated my father]. “I think there was a label on it. I could not read what was printed on the label. I cannot swear it was the same bottle, but only that it was very like it in all respects. The prisoner then left the room. I am quite sure it was she. I saw her face plainly.”

‘Cross-examined.—“I did not say anything to her as she left the room. I did not say anything but ‘Who’s that?’ when she came in. I did not say anything when she took away the bottle. I did not tell any one the next morning that she had been in my room. I thought it strange that she should have come into my room and gone to the cupboard. I did not like to offend her, as she was very rude. I did not know that she was going to my uncle Tanner. I have already said that I did not know her. No one found me out as a witness. I came forward of my own accord, when I read about this case in the papers. I have never seen a person walk in her sleep. The deceased Mr. Tanner was my mother’s brother. My father has not been on terms with him for years. I never saw him. I do not know how his property will go if the prisoner be convicted of murder.”’

‘Now,’ said my father, folding up the brief, ‘what do you make of that?’

‘Who defended the prisoner?’ I asked.

‘Lusher.’

‘He is going to prove that she walks in her sleep?’

‘Perhaps he will.’

‘And he is going to break down your fine-young-lady witness till no ten words of her story will hold together. Just consider,’ I went on, warming into my subject : ‘these two women are both strangers in a strange house. How could Elizabeth Tanner possibly know that there was poison in that room? If she did know, is it reasonable to suppose she would take it whilst the other was looking at her? They had quarrelled, or at any rate Elizabeth had

said sharp things to her. Is it likely that she would not have taken her revenge by telling next morning? Would one woman trust another, whom she had offended, to hold her tongue under such circumstances? Not a bit of it! Would a truthful woman have held her tongue in such a case, under any circumstances? If Lusher can prove that the prisoner walks in her sleep, he can easily make out that she went to the witness's room, frightened her so that she did not know whether she was on her head or her heels, and that she either invented the bottle business, or dreamed it.'

'But the bottle was found near Mrs. Thomas's cottage.'

'Upon a public road, along which hundreds of people pass! And when? Long after the murder, and empty! How do you know that your fine-young-lady witness did not take it herself and throw it there? She has a motive. If she gets rid of her only cousin, she doubles her share out of old Tanner's money.'

'You're prejudiced against the witness.'

'I am,' I admitted; 'I don't know why, but I certainly am.'

'You wouldn't be if you saw her,' my father said with a smile. 'She is very good-looking, and gave her evidence before the magistrates modestly, and with great apparent truthfulness. I think, with you, that it can be shaken, but I believe every word of it.'

'Ah! you're prejudiced against the other girl.'

'My dear boy, who else could have poisoned Tanner?'

'He might have poisoned himself.'

'Now you are getting unreasonable. Remember his dying cry, "Damn her! This is her work; damn her!" He wasn't the sort of man to commit suicide.'

'Now then for another counter-twist. Grant that the prisoner got possession of Killick's bottle; let us come back to the question of administering the poison.'

'You said it might have been hidden in the empty pot,' I remarked.

'If so, he must have taken it in his *first* drink. Now, that quantity of corrosive sublimate would have given such an acrid taste to the beer, that any sober man would have detected something wrong before he had swallowed the second mouthful. The post-mortem examination shows that he had drunk more than a quart. Remember, there was a gill left in the pot he used—a pint one. According to the hid-in-the-pot theory, he must have drunk less than a pint, unless he used something else to drink out of; and no other pot, or cup, or glass, or mug, or anything of the sort, was found. But she ran away and stole his money: that twists it back again.'

' Could she have given him the poison after she returned from Mrs. Thomas ? '

' No—impossible. She was seen to go into the house, and immediately afterwards called for help. The old man was dying then.'

' Did he leave any will ? '

' Not he ! He was afraid of its being known that he was rich.'

' Rich ! Two hundred and seventy sovereigns isn't—'

' That was only his ready money. The old rascal had mining shares and house property worth from sixteen to seventeen thousand pounds. There was plenty of motive for getting him out of the way. You had better come over with me and hear the case tried. Miss Elizabeth will be well defended. Lusher has retained Serjeant Raikes, and they are going to call evidence for the defence. That is why the trial was postponed from the last assizes.'

' When will it come on ? '

' Early on Tuesday or Wednesday ; and that reminds me that I've got to see Killick about getting a plan of his house. I shall drive over this afternoon. You can come too, if you like. By the by, you might make the drawing for me.'

I went with him ; taking the necessary tackle. I was shown along a passage at the end of which was a door. I was told to mind, as there were three steps down. I had not reached the second, when I saw an oriel window, a cavernous fireplace, and a red-brick floor. Another step, and I was in the room of my dream !—in the room where that strange horror had overpowered me, flowing as it were from the great press on the left-hand side of the entrance —the very press from which the bottle of poison had been taken !

Then I asked the name of the witness who had passed the night there, and learned for the first time that it was Ocna Berry.

MY THIRD.

' Pooh ! ' exclaimed my father as he entered ; ' the place smells like a grave. Open the windows, Killick, won't you ? Why, Frank, you look as pale as a ghost.'

' It's the foul air,' I stammered. ' For God's sake, come out of it, or we shall be choked.'

' Oh, it's not so bad as that,' my father replied. ' There, now ! here comes the breeze. Leave the door open, and it will soon drive out the damp. What the deuce do you keep the place shut up for like this, Killick ? '

Killick explained that he did so because he thought the gentle-

men—meaning the justices and the coroner—might come again to ‘rummage’ ; but from what I afterwards heard, it appeared that no one liked to enter the room with ‘them pisons and things’ about, lest they too should get into trouble. Being a witness in a criminal case was considered a sort of ‘trouble’ in our part of the country, and is so still.

The foul atmosphere was a godsend for me. It accounted for my agitation, and served as an excuse to hasten to the window whilst Killick and my father had their talk. I made my measurements, and drew my plan, which included a drawing of the press from which the poison had been taken, and upon which a lock had now been placed in consequence of some remarks made at the adjourned inquest. I will confess that my heart beat painfully fast when the key was turned, and the great doors opened before me for the second time.

Everything was there exactly as I had seen in my dream : the bowls, the bats, the instruments, the books, the gallipots, and the bottles. The places of some of these had been changed, but there they all were. I got rid of my father and Killick, on the plea that I wanted to make a sketch of the room, and could not do so with people talking around me. I dashed off what might pass for a drawing, and took up my real interest—to make a thorough search in and about that press. What did I think I should find ? I really did not think of finding anything ; I wanted to make myself familiar with it, so that it should not haunt me, as I feared it might do if I left it unexplored. In the first place, I wanted to see whether the doors would open of themselves if a shake or a gust of wind should slightly part them. I opened them a quarter of an inch, half an inch, an inch, and then they swung back by themselves, giving me another cold creepy sensation down the back. I searched every shelf from top to bottom, but found nothing to reward me for dusty hands and a broken brace. The room was now bare. The turn-up bedstead and three-legged table had been removed, but the broken lawn mower and the rusty pair of ‘dogs’ were still where I had seen them last. ‘Now,’ thought I, out of mere curiosity, ‘let me see what is in the other presses.’ I was standing by the fireplace when this idea came into my head, and walked towards the one at the entrance, on the right-hand side of the door. As I went my foot slipped, and I nearly fell. I looked down, and found that I had slipped on a drop of candle-grease. I examined the floor carefully, and found four others between the spot where I stumbled and the door. Now, Ocna had sworn that Elizabeth Tanner came into the room with a candle. The room had had no occupant since the night she passed in it, and had been closed

since the 14th of January. Something might be made of those grease spots. I would ask Killick when the room had been scrubbed last, and if any one was in the habit of going there with a candle. I was on the second step, passing out, when it occurred to me to close and lock the press. You had to shut the right-hand flap first, and bolt it with a bolt that shot downwards into the framework; then you closed the other on the bevelled edge. I had some difficulty in forcing the bolt home; and as it is one of my peculiarities to put such things to rights if I can, I took my scarf pin and cleared out the hole.

There came out of that hole seven pieces of worsted—two black, two blue, and three white; partly woven together, and all the same length.

'If Miss Elizabeth Tanner has a shawl with a black, blue, and white fringe,' I said to myself, 'and a bit of it is missing, all the Serjeant Raikeses in the world cannot save her neck.'

I thought it wise to keep this discovery to myself till I got home; but told my father then and there about the grease spots. We found that the room had been scrubbed out for Miss Berry when she insisted upon sleeping alone, and that no one went there at night with or without a candle. We got a bricklayer, took up the bricks on which the spots were, and carried them off with us as witnesses. 'It's a circumstance,' said my father, as we drove along, 'with not much in it of itself, but I give you great credit for finding it out.'

Then I told him what else I had discovered, and he exclaimed, 'By Jove! Frank, you'll do! I'll have every rag that girl has examined. All her things are sealed up, and you shall overhaul them yourself. I'm so glad I brought you. If we find what you suspect, you're a made man.'

We did find exactly what I suspected. Elizabeth Tanner had a worsted shawl—black, blue, and white. She wore it in the coach on the day of the upset, and precisely seven strands of the fringe at one corner were missing! She must have caught it on the bolt of the press as she shut the door.

'Now, how about your prejudice against poor Miss Berry? my father asked triumphantly. And the somnambulism!' he continued; 'that won't do either. You'll have to attend the trial as an important witness now, young man, instead of a spectator.'

This set me thinking of Ocea and Mark. Their marriage was fixed for the 24th; the trial was to take place on the 18th. Would he come with her? If so, how was I to get off going back with them? I had written to him, saying that of course I would be his best man, meaning to excuse myself at the last moment. I

had congratulated Ocna, and told her to rely on my doing all she wished. I should have to see her in court, but that could not be helped. I thought it passing strange that she had never attended in any way to the murder of her uncle. Was this the troublesome law business of which she had spoken? As I reflected, I remembered that she had never spoken to me of my family or my home, and that I had told her I was going to visit my *fiancée*, without mentioning that I should proceed to Wales. 'How surprised she will be,' I thought, 'to find that I am also a witness in the case.'

By this time all my prejudice had vanished: The unnamed witness, whose story on paper I had picked to pieces, was an abstraction whom I had judged on abstract principles—Ocna Berry in the flesh was another, and quite another, individual.

It would be just like her to shrink from an altercation with an angry, bold woman like Elizabeth Tanner; just like her to ask no questions and tell no tales about a matter which might have no importance; just like her to come forward when its importance was manifest, to tell the truth for the truth's sake.

But how odd it was that these two women should be cousins, and not know each other! How odd it was again, that the theory of the one about putting disagreeable old people out of the way should have been carried out by the other! Nevertheless, I had got quite reconciled, as it were, to Ocna, when a letter from Mark threw me back into doubts and questionings.

'You will be sorry to hear,' he wrote, 'that my Ocna is far from well. I wrote to you yesterday, and took the letter to her to ask if she would not add a line. She went with it to her desk for that purpose, and had not walked three steps before she fell as though she had been shot. The poor dear girl passed from one fainting fit into another, and is unable to leave her room to-day. I am very anxious and unhappy about her. The worst of it is that she insists upon keeping an engagement she has made to go to Devonshire for a few days on the 16th, to visit some old aunt or other. Well or ill, she says she must go; and will not let me go with her. Her father backs her up in this insane resolve, and is exceedingly grumpy when I resist it. We almost quarrelled. Wait till Ocna and I are married, and I'll teach him a lesson or two. They will be back on the 22nd. Why cannot you come up at once, old man? it will be awfully lonely when she's away.'

So she had fainted at the sight of a letter addressed to me, and was trying to hide her attendance at the assizes for South Wales by a pretended visit to an aunt in Devonshire!

'What folly!' I thought. 'Why, every newspaper in the country would have an account of such a trial.'

The trial came on as arranged ; I had a seat next to my father in the well of the court, just under the Counsel for the Crown—Durham, Q.C., the leader of the Circuit, and Mr. Finch, a steady old 'Junior' who did all the heavy prosecutions. Mr. Durham's opening speech was calm, close, deadly. The motive, the means to carry it out, the result, the death, the flight of the prisoner, were hammered together, link by link, with fatal precision. There seemed to be no weak place in the chain.

The first witness examined was the doctor whom the prisoner had called in, and who subsequently made the post-mortem examination.

Then farmer Killick proved having purchased the poison, and placed it in the press we know of ; he told about the accident to the coach, and that the prisoner and the witness, Miss Berry, had passed the night at his house. He swore that the latter had worn a shawl similar to the one produced, and identified the bricks we had taken up.

Very little was made out of him in cross-examination, except that the prisoner was a stranger to him, and could not have known that he had poisons in the house. Then Mr. Finch rose and called 'Ocna Berry.'

I had not yet seen her. The witness-box was within three yards of where I sat. Our eyes met as she entered it, but she made no sign of recognition. She was deadly pale, and trembled so that she could hardly draw off her glove. The prisoner, who had listened to the evidence so far in dogged silence, became violently excited, and exclaimed, 'That woman ! oh, that woman ! she'll swear my life away !' Her eyes flashed, her bosom heaved, she struck her hand on the bar with such violence that the blood came. Then she fainted.

I do not know which was the calmer of the two during this outbreak—the Judge, or Ocna Berry.

I never saw her look so lovely. Her pallor became her, and added refinement and delicacy to her always sweet face. I was young, and susceptible to the influence of beauty. I began to hate myself for having doubted her story—strange as it was—and questioned the motives which led her to conceal her movements from Mark. Many people think it degrading to give evidence in a Court of Justice. She was foolish in thinking that she could deceive her lover—that was all. And yet I found myself saying to my own heart, *I hope to God she will tell the truth !* Now, if you

do not remember her statement, as read to me by my father, do me the favour to turn back and reperuse it.

In about a quarter of an hour the prisoner had recovered and was quiet again.

The case went on.

Having given her name, age, &c. &c., her examination proceeded thus:

Q. 'Do you remember the 3rd of last August ?'

A. 'I do. The coach in which my father and I were travelling was upset, and we passed the night at Mr. Killick's house.'

Q. 'Was the prisoner one of your fellow-passengers ?'

A. 'She was.'

Q. 'Had you ever seen her before ?'

A. 'I had not; but from something she said on the coach, I knew she was my cousin.'

Q. 'In what room did you sleep ?'

A. 'In a sort of pantry with a brick floor. They wanted me to sleep with the prisoner, but I had taken a dislike to her.'

Q. 'Well, I believe you were not very comfortable ?'

A. 'Oh, I was so tired, that I could have slept anywhere.'

Mr. Finch referred to his brief; but was too old a hand to look puzzled. Serjeant Raikes made a note, and underscored it twice.

Q. 'Did anything disturb you during the night ?'

A. 'Not until I had been to the cupboard.'

Q. 'I suppose you mean, not till the prisoner had ?'

Up started the Serjeant. 'Stop, stop! I object,' he urged. 'Really, my Lord, such a suggestion is most improper.'

'You had better let the witness tell her story in her own way,' said the judge. 'Go on,' he added kindly to Ocna; 'take your time, and tell what happened in your own way.'

Her beauty attracted every eye. There was a peculiar ring in her voice—though it was low and sweet—which hushed every other sound. You could hear a pin drop as she proceeded.

'I went to sleep almost directly after I got into bed, but I woke up about one o'clock, and began to think about Uncle Tanner, how rich he was, and how horrid; and what a good thing it would be for us if I could kill him, and not be found out.'

I will not even try to describe the sensation this produced. The prisoner uttered a piercing cry, half laugh, half scream. Finch turned round and looked at his leader, aghast. The Serjeant was so excited that he could hardly take down the words.

'Are you trifling with the court,' asked the judge severely, 'or is it possible you have been—? Mr. Finch, is your witness sober?

'I am quite sober,' Ocna replied for herself; 'I must tell the truth. I know I have sworn falsely once before, but I must tell the truth to-day.' There was no movement of surprise now. The court was as silent as a graveyard at midnight; you could hear the ticking of the clock: *I* could hear the beating of my heart. The judge drew a long breath, and said, 'It is my duty, witness, to tell you that you are not obliged to criminate yourself.'

'Oh yes, I am,' she replied, as quietly as though he had said, 'You are not obliged to sing a song.' 'You do not know. I *must* tell the truth. I cannot help it. It was I who poisoned Uncle Tanner.'

Here the pent-up excitement burst all bounds. It began with a gasp, and widened into a rush of feet and a roar of tongues. The court—like most of our courts of justice—was so constituted that about one-fifth of those assembled in it could hear what went on. Those who could not hear, rushed forward to learn what had happened. Those who had heard, rushed back to tell. In vain did the criers call 'Silence!' and the Javelin-men thump the floor with the butts of their ungainly weapons. It was not until the order to clear the court had been executed by the police with main force, that comparative order was restored.

All this time Ocna stood in the witness-box, unnerved.

'I must admit,' the judge began, 'I have been unable to take a note of the last answer given by this witness.'

'I have, my Lord,' replied the counsel for the prisoner. 'After your Lordship had mercifully recommended the witness not to convict herself, she said, 'I *must* tell the truth. I cannot help it. It was I who poisoned Uncle Tanner.'

'Is that correct, Mr. Durham?' from the Bench.

'It is, my Lord. I fear the witness has been tampered with.'

'Tampered with!' repeated his Lordship. 'If she had modified her first statement so as to screen the prisoner, I might have thought so; but she accuses herself. It appears to me that the questions you have to consider now are simply these—first, is she in her right senses? and then, if she be not—can you go on with the case?'

'I will ask your Lordship for an adjournment, in order that I may consult with my learned friend and the gentleman who instructs us,' said Durham.

'Have you any objection, brother Raikes?'

'None, my Lord, provided that the witness be not allowed to leave,' said the Serjeant.

'The witness must certainly be detained in custody,' said the judge. 'Gentlemen of the Jury, I am sorry to put you to in-

convenience, but you must see the propriety of the course suggested. The case is adjourned till to-morrow at nine o'clock. In the mean time, I would suggest that the witness be examined by some competent medical men.'

'Frank,' said my father, gravely, as we walked to the hotel, 'you are keeping something back from me. Why did you take a prejudice against that woman when I read you her deposition? and why did she tell those awful lies, looking at you as if *you* were examining her?'

'Did she?' I replied, more to gain time than for anything else, as I knew she had never taken her eyes off mine.

'Yes, she did.'

'Remember that I was sitting right under Finch.'

'True, but the level of her look was about his knee. What does it mean?'

'Don't ask me now,' I pleaded. 'I don't know myself. I have kept a lot away from you because I thought you'd laugh at me. God only knows *what* it means. The only thing that I am sure of is that she has spoken the truth to-day.'

'You must come with me to Durham's lodgings,' my father said with decision, 'and tell all you know. There must be no concealment or nonsense in a case like this. Unless we can show that she is stark staring mad, we may just as well give up the prosecution at once, and go home.'

'If it be madness to have no moral consciousness of wrong, she is mad,' I replied.

I attended the consultation, and made a clean breast of it: told them of her extraordinary submission to me, and of the mistake I had made in attributing it to affection, of my conversation with her during which she said she was not good—would steal but for fear of punishment, and did not consider the killing of troublesome old persons to be murder; told them of my dream, of her request not to see me until after her marriage, of her pretended visit to Devonshire; told them all, but made no attempt to explain anything. I left these hard-headed lawyers in the dark, but I had caught a glimpse of light. There is nothing like going over a thing out loud before third persons, to make it clear in your own mind. Thinking to yourself is like looking through a cul-de-sac. You see the object bit by bit, but its general effect is not presented.

At the hotel I found a message from the High Sheriff, requesting me to come to the gaol at once. I hurried back to Mr. Durham's lodgings, and was told that he had received a like summons,

and had started. In the matron's room I found assembled the Sheriff, Durham, and my father, Serjeant Raikes, the doctor, and another medico who had come to investigate Ocna's state of mind, the matron, and Ocna herself, who came forward with a smile, and held out her hand as though nothing remarkable had happened since last we met.

'Now,' she said, turning toward the doctors, 'you can ask me anything you like, and I will tell the truth.'

'For some reasons of her own,' remarked the gaol doctor, 'which she will not disclose, Miss Berry declines to say anything except in your presence. That is why we have sent for you.'

I bowed, and took a seat.

'Now, Miss Berry,' said the doctor, 'how long ago is it since you began to think that you poisoned old Mr. Tanner?'

'Think I poisoned him!' she replied; 'I did poison him.'

'Yes, but is it not a fact that you have heard voices saying things to you? Did the voices ever say that you had poisoned him?—now, think.'

She laughed. 'Oh, I have read all about that. Voices? nonsense! Mad people hear voices. I'm not mad. You are wasting time with your foolish questions. I want to tell the whole truth. Listen, for I am tired. When I was in India, I knew a girl who was like me—under an influence. The man, like him' (pointing to me) 'could make her do anything he pleased. She could not tell him a falsehood. We used to make play of it. One night, at a party given by the general, we agreed before she came that he was to will her to turn a certain picture round with its face to the wall—and she did so in the middle of a dance, when she thought no one was looking. When she married, the influence passed away. Perhaps it might have been the same with me. Poor Mark! I wish I had married him at once, as he wanted. From the first moment I saw you'—she continued, addressing me—'I knew that you could make me do what you pleased. When I came into court to-day, you willed that I should tell the truth—you know you did. If you had not been there, I should have told my old story.'

'And sent an innocent woman to the gallows!' I interrupted with a shudder.

'She is a horrid creature. It would not have mattered much. Perhaps her lawyers would have got her off. I had to protect myself—*then*. Well, I got that poison, as I have told you, and I was returning to my bed, when Elizabeth Tanner came in with a candle in her hand. She was walking in her sleep. I had left the doors of the cupboard open, and her shawl caught in the bolt;

she tore it free, and passed on round the room, and out again. How she frightened me ! Now let me think what next : Oh ! the poisoning. We were dreadfully hard pressed for money, and papa thought that perhaps Uncle Tanner would lend us some if I asked him, for my mother's sake, as he had been fond of her. By this time the idea of killing him had quite gone out of my head, for I had no chance to do so—don't you see ? So we went to Swansea, and I walked alone to his house. When I got there, I was afraid to go in because of Elizabeth. I knew she hated me, and would interfere if she could. As I waited, thinking what to do—if I should send for him to come to me, or what—she went out. "Now," thought I, "the coast is clear," and I walked in. I found Uncle Tanner in the kitchen, smoking a long clay pipe, and drinking beer out of a pewter pot. At first he was only sulky: but when I told him what I wanted, he became furious ; cursed my father and my mother and myself—oh, so dreadfully ! I never heard such language. When I answered him, he made a blow at me with a great stick he had ; and if I had not started back, he might have dashed my brains out. He raged and foamed like a maniac. He swore that none of us should have a shilling of his money ; that it was an insult and an outrage for a man who had treated him as my father had done, to ask a favour of him ; that he would send for a lawyer and make his will, giving everything he had to Elizabeth ; and then he fell to abusing and cursing her for leaving him alone. It was then that the idea of killing him came back to my mind. I had the poison with me ; I always carried it about with me, because, moving from place to place as we did, there was nowhere to hide it safely. I turned my back as if to go, shook out a little into my hand, and, watching my opportunity as he raged up and down the room, tossed it into the beer-pot.

'On my way back, I emptied the rest of the stuff out on the road, and I threw away the bottle into a ditch. We left by the steamer at night. That is all, I think. Stay; I want you to understand that papa knew nothing of this—absolutely nothing.'

'You have not told us what prompted you to come forward as a witness ?' asked the doctor.

'Oh yes, I forgot. It was at Bristol, I think, that we read about Uncle Tanner in the newspapers, and heard that Elizabeth was accused of his murder. Papa gave a start, and said, 'Why, good heavens, Ocna ! if this woman be hanged, we shall come in for all his property. That was why I wrote and said I knew where she got the poison ; but papa had nothing to do with it.'

'One murder was not enough for you, then?' asked Serjeant Raikes with his bitter sneer.

'It is absurd to talk of *murder*,' she replied haughtily. 'Is it murder to kill a mad dog? Uncle Tanner was no use to himself or any one. He would have drunk himself to death in a month or two. He was more than half crazy, as it was. I considered him rather as a sort of mischievous wild beast than a man; but he intended to do, and no doubt would have done, us a great wrong, as a man, if he had lived. He would have given all his money away from us to that creature. Oh! I know all about her. She ran away with a circus rider. She was as common and as vile as she could be at Leamington. Any one who knew her there will tell you that. Was such a creature to stand in my way, and go about rich and shameless, taking husbands from their wives and lovers from their sweethearts, as all such wretches do? Who knows but that she would have killed the old man herself, if she had a chance! Depend upon it, such a creature as she is did not shut herself up with him in that dull place for nothing.'

'You have told us,' said the doctor, after a long pause, 'that you feel bound to tell the truth now because of some special influence which you suppose this gentleman' (indicating me) 'to possess over you; do you not feel yourself influenced by God's commandment, "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour"?'

'Your neighbour,' she retorted, 'is some one who is good to you, like the Samaritan; not a vixenish wanton like Elizabeth Tanner, who tries to supplant you and do you all the harm she can.'

'May we take it, then, as your opinion, that an act which would be wicked if done to a good person is excusable when done to one who is not good?'

'You may. It is common sense. What is the use of being good, and giving up all sorts of pleasant things, if you are to have no advantage over people like Robert Tanner, for example? I am very tired, sir. I have told you all I have to say. You must excuse my declining to answer any more of these foolish questions.'

The next day the chaplain saw her alone, and made no more out of her than the doctors had done. 'She has the most extraordinary talent of perversion,' he reported. 'There is not one principle of ethics that she does not turn upside down and inside out, to her own perfect satisfaction. And it is all spontaneous, for she has read nothing that could prompt her to such convictions.' This was not strictly correct, as she had horrified the worthy clergyman with anthropomorphic readings of certain events recorded in the Old Testament:

The trial of Elizabeth Tanner resulted in her acquittal. At the next assizes Ocna Berry took her place in the dock. Poor Mark, who stood loyally by her to the last, though convinced that she was temporarily insane, wished to retain counsel for her; but she insisted upon defending herself. She did so with such success—insisted upon her sanity in such a way—that the jury found her Not Guilty, on the ground of insanity, without leaving the box. The usual sentence—to be detained during Her Majesty's pleasure—was passed, and she was removed to the County Lunatic Asylum, where she died, a raving maniac, before a year had passed.

MY WHOLE.

Now, the enigma presented is—was she insane all the time? Was her idea, that I exercised an influence over her, the delusion of a failing mind? Or, being sane, was her sad end brought about by the horror of her position, and a newly awakened feeling of remorse? I have answered it *Yes*, and I have been certain that *No* should be the reply, according as I admitted or rejected certain propositions which caused serious people at that time to scoff. When I ask myself how I came to dream that dream, and how she came to know, when about to give her evidence, that I willed her to tell the truth, I cannot but conclude that there is something supernatural in it. When I reflect that I never had the slightest wish to control her, did absolutely nothing to subject her to my will, and never before or since exercised such power over any one—I am inclined to admit that natural forces were at work in her poor brain. But then, the dream! There is nothing the matter with *me*. I am a prosaic, plodding old attorney-at-law, with a grown-up family—one whom no one, I think, will accuse of lunacy. There is a mystery about that dream which flows over the whole case, which cannot be extricated from it, and which carries me back to a vicious circle in which I go round and round, undecided.

ALBANY DE FONBLANQUE.

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